

WILD WEST



A MAGAZINE CONTAINING STORIES, SKETCHES Etc. OF WESTERN LIFE.

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YOUNG WILD WEST AT GOLD GORGE; OR ARIETTA AND THE DROP OF DEATH. AND OTHER STORIES BY AN OLD SCOUT



As the stone turned under Arietta's foot she uttered a scream and then, losing her balance, went whirling down into the gorge. But Young Wild West and his partners were there to catch her, for they had heard the scream.

A. Greenblatt
69 Montague Ave.

WILD WEST WEEKLY

A Magazine Containing Stories, Sketches, Etc., of Western Life

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YOUNG WILD WEST AT GOLD GORGE

—OR—

ARIETTA AND THE DROP OF DEATH

By AN OLD SCOUT

CHAPTER I.

ON THE TRAIL TO GOLD GORGE.

Gold had just been discovered in large quantities at a wild spot in Arizona called Gold Gorge. Miners and men who had never seen a mine were flocking to it, the latter being possessed of the idea that they were going to get rich very quickly.

The climate of Southern Arizona is very warm in the month of July, and the scarcity of water in that region makes traveling by wagon and horseback anything but pleasant.

On the afternoon on which our story opens a party of eight might have been seen riding along a winding trail that ran over the Caliuero Range.

There was something about the members of this party that was bound to attract the attention of the casual observer. Two were mere boys, though they about had their growth and were as well formed and athletic as men, one was a tall man somewhere around thirty, two were handsome girls in their teens, one was a young woman past twenty, and the remaining two were common, every-day-looking Chinamen.

One of the boys was the most dashing-looking young fellow who ever rode over green prairie grass. He was handsome of face and figure, and had a wealth of long chestnut hair hanging over his shoulders.

This was no other than the Champion Deadshot of the West, Young Wild West.

The other boy was Jim Dart, and the tall man Cheyenne Charlie, the famous scout and Indian fighter.

These two were the partners and inseparable companions of Young Wild West, and many were the thrilling adventures and hair-breadth escapes the three had passed through.

The two girls were Arietta Murdock and Eloise Gardner, the sweethearts of the boys, while the young woman was Anna, the wife of Cheyenne Charlie, the scout.

The Chinamen were two brothers bearing the names of Hop Wah and Wing Wah, and were the servants of our friends already described.

Arietta Murdock, the charming sweetheart of Young Wild West, was a true daughter of the great West. She had been born and reared there during the troublous times when the Indians made war on the settlers, and consequently she knew how to ride a horse and handle a firearm as well as the average man or boy.

She was a pronounced blonde, her hair being of a reddish golden hue, and her eyes the color of the clear blue sky.

Eloise Gardner, Jim Dart's sweetheart, was a pretty brunette, and though she had not been born in the wild part of the country, she could shoot and ride pretty well.

Anna was as girlish-looking as the other two, but she, being older than they, was a sort of chaperon to them.

As the party came to a level stretch of burning white sand, with only here and there a bunch of cactus to be seen, Cheyenne Charlie twisted his flowing black mustache uneasily and observed:

"I reckon we'll be lucky if we strike any water to-night. We're about out, too. This blamed trail is a new one to me. I wish we had taken another route. We might have been longer gittin' ter Gold Gorge, but it would have been more pleasant, I reckon."

"We'll strike water all right, Charlie," answered Young Wild West. "See that blue streak ahead? Well, that is timber, and where there is timber there is generally water. Mark my words for it; we will find water there. There is so much dust that the ridge over there looks to be much farther off than it really is. We will strike there before sunset, see if we don't."

"I hope we do, Wild," spoke up Arietta. "I am thirsty, and a nice cool drink of water from a trickling stream would go very nice, I am sure."

"You will have all the water you want, Et," was the retort. "I seldom make a mistake on water."

"Or anything else, for that matter," chimed in Jim Dart, who had the opinion that what Young Wild West did not know was not worth knowing.

They rode on through the hot sun, but the two Chinamen did not seem to mind it, and presently one of them began to sing a song in his own language.

It was Hop Wah who was doing this. He was probably more innocent-looking than his brother, but that was as far as it went.

Hop was as smart as any Celestial could be, and what he could not do in the line of performing sleight-of-hand tricks was hardly worth the knowing.

He was a sort of humorist, too, though to look at him one would be apt to think that he did not know what anything funny was.

His failings were that he would lie and take things that did not belong to him, but when he did this what he stole was invariably of no value to him.

It was a sort of mania, and there was more fun out of it than there was harm.

Hop loved to gamble, too, and being able to do tricks in magic, he of course was capable of cheating those he played with.

He took advantage of his ability, and it was just his hobby to strike a professional card sharp and beat him at his own game.

As he had saved the life of our hero, and had done lots of good service for both he and his friends several times, Wild never thought of discharging him.

Wing was different from his brother. He was simply a Chinaman, that was all.

But he was strictly honest, and a very good cook.

"That heathen galoot is putty happy, fur a hot day like this," remarked the scout, as the shrill voice of the Celestial echoed over the sandy stretch. "I wonder if he ain't got hold of some whisky somewhere."

"The chances are that he stocked up with some at our last stopping-place," Jim Dart answered. "Of course, none of us saw him buy it; he has a way of doing such things when no one is looking his way."

"Well, a little drop of tanglefoot, with a good drink of cold water after it, wouldn't go bad jest now," and the scout looked toward the blue streak they were approaching.

"Me name Hop Wah; come foin Pekin," sang Hop, taking up the pidgin-English he spoke when addressing our friends. "Me allee samee smartee Chinee; me lide aloud and havee fun; me gittee dlunk and havee splee."

"I told yer that ther pig-tailed galoot had some tangle-foot!" exclaimed Cheyenne Charlie. "Jest listen ter that! He wants us ter know it."

Wild could not help laughing, and it was catching, for everybody but Charlie joined it.

"Let him have his spree," he said. "I guess it can't be much of a one he'll have, for he certainly hasn't got a very large supply of liquor on hand. Why don't you see what he has got, Charlie?"

"I reckon I will," and the scout slackened the pace of his horse and dropped back to the Chinamen, who were at the rear, leading a couple of pack-horses.

"Whattée want, Misler Charlie?" asked Hop, looking at him with his almond eyes half-shut.

"Where did yer git ther whisky, you yaller heathen?"

"Me no gottee tanglefoot, Misler Charlie," was the retort. "You just too latee; me dlunk um allee up."

Then the Celestial showed him an empty pint flask.

"Velly goodee tanglefoot," spoke up Wing, who had been allowed one or two swallows from the flask, and thought he must say something in the way of an exclamation.

A look of disgust came over the face of the scout.

"It was very good, hey?" he remarked. "How do I know whether it was or not?"

"Me no know," and Wing's yellow countenance became as blank as a pine board.

The laugh was on the scout, for everybody had something to say just then, and becoming exasperated, he seized the empty flask and threw it in the air.

Before it turned to descend he whipped out his revolver and shattered it with a bullet.

The incident served to take off some of the monotony, and all hands felt better over it as they rode along and rapidly neared the timber, which they could now see plainly.

But the dust was pretty thick yet, and when they had covered another ten miles they found that Young Wild West was right when he said it was much closer than it had looked to be.

"In half an hour from now I guess we'll find some water," remarked our hero. "Don't drink any of the luke-warm stuff, but just wait."

Fifteen minutes later they came upon other vegetation than the prickly cacti.

Sage bushes were now getting plentiful, and there were a few bunches of mesquite to be seen.

As they rode on a flock of sage-hens suddenly raised before them, and then all hands fired, even to the girls.

Young Wild West brought down two in as many shots, and all but Anna and Eloise succeeded in downing one of the birds.

The Chinamen were not included, for they did not carry Winchesters.

"There is something for supper, I guess," said Wild, as he brought his splendid sorrel stallion, Spi fire, to a halt, and dismounted.

"Yes, but I reckon there ain't quite enough," retorted Charlie, as he followed his example.

The scout then started in the direction the flock had gone.

"Wait a minute, Charlie," called out Arietta. "I will get my shot-gun from the pack-horse, and then I know we will get enough for supper."

Wing Wah no sooner heard this than he unstrapped the gun and had it ready for her right away.

The girl took it and started off through the sage bushes with the scout.

The hens had not gone very far, so they reached them in quick time.

As they arose Arietta fired twice, and Charlie did the same. But the girl had the best of him, for she was using shot against his bullets.

She dropped five of them, and Charlie two.

"There!" she exclaimed, as she started to pick up the fallen birds. "I guess we have enough now."

"Just a round dozen," observed Young Wild West, a few minutes later, when they had gathered the sage-hens in. "That is one and a half apiece. Quite enough, I should think."

The two Celestials took charge of the birds and plucked the feathers from them as they rode along.

In less than half an hour later Wild turned in the saddle, and with an exultant look, exclaimed:

"What did I tell you? There's the water we have been longing for during the last two days!"

Sure enough, a stream could be seen trickling from a clump of rocks less than two hundred yards ahead.

They had reached a hilly part of the range that was thickly wooded.

The mesquite shrubs were thicker where the ground was fed by the cooling stream, and the grass grew tall and of a dark green.

"Here is the spot we have been longing for!" Wild said, as he rode up to it and dismounted.

A sigh of relief went up simultaneously from the rest of the party.

It was indeed a welcome place of refuge they had found, for the trail had been a hard one for the past forty-eight hours.

The sun was yet two hours high, but they figured that they had gone as far as they cared to that day.

A rest till morning would do them good.

Many, who might have been afflicted with the gold fever from the wonderful stories told about Gold Gorge, would probably have rested and replenished their water kegs, and then pushed on for the goal.

But Young Wild West and his friends had experienced too much in the way of gold mining to become excited about such things.

They figured that the striking of a rich vein was only a matter of luck, anyhow, and that they would have as good a chance as those who got there ahead of them.

The fact was that none of them were in want of wealth.

Wild and his two partners had several mines in various parts of the West, and our hero owned two ranches, besides.

The ranches did not pay much more than the running expenses, but he kept them so he would have a place to go when he felt like taking a rest.

It was adventure that Young Wild West looked for, more than wealth.

And his partners and the girls were just the same way inclined.

When all had drank from the cooling little stream the Chinamen set to unloading the pack-horses.

The tired animals were allowed to drink, along with the other horses, and then all were turned out to browse at the luxuriant grass that was so seldom found in that part of the country.

All hands helped in putting up the two tents they carried, and when this was accomplished it was about time to prepare the evening meal.

The sage-hens they had shot being plucked, it was not a very long task to get them ready by the two Celestials.

A fire was started, and then a little later the cooking was in progress.

Young Wild West and his partners were quite used to traveling around through the wild parts of the West and Southwest, and they had learned to always take along plenty of provender.

It was not always advisable to depend upon the game that they might shoot, for sometimes they would strike places where there was none to be seen, let alone shoot.

Then, again, a person cannot live very well on game alone.

They had more than enough to last them until they arrived at Gold Gorge, which was only a day's travel now.

The sage-hens were nicely broiled, and, with the other things they had to eat, made a very appetizing meal.

"I reckon we was lucky in strikin' that flock of chickens," Cheyenne Charlie remarked, as he picked his teeth with a sharpened stick after he was through his supper. "They jest filled in nice, an' they made a change, too."

"Well, we were lucky all around to-day," said Jim Dart. "Last night this time we had nothing but sand and prickly cactus around us, and we could drink nothing but coffee, since the water was too warm to drink."

"They say that Gold Gorge is well supplied with water, and that game is plentiful there," observed Young Wild West. "I suppose we will find lots to do there besides hunting for gold."

"Yer kin bet there'll be plenty of bad galoots there, who will be tryin' ter beat them what has got anything out of it," Charlie answered. "If it ain't that way there it will be the first new camp I ever seen that wasn't."

The scout was just filling his pipe when they suddenly heard the noise made by an approaching horse.

Whoever it was coming, he was in a great hurry, for the hoofbeats were rapid enough.

Young Wild West calmly arose to his feet and picked up his rifle.

"Get ready for business, boys," he said. "You can't tell where you stand in this part of the country."

The next instant a young man, riding rather awkwardly, came into view.

Behind him in close pursuit were three men who had all the appearance of being ruffians.

CHAPTER II.

THE THREE VILLAINS ARE PUT TO FLIGHT.

"Hello, there!" cried Young Wild West, as the young man saw the occupants of the camp and quickly reined in his steed. "What's all this about?"

"They're after me!" was the reply in a tone of voice that showed that he had been badly frightened. "They want to rob me."

"They do, eh? Well, that sort of business don't go, not when we are around."

The three rough-looking men had halted now, and they sat on their horses at a distance of probably fifty feet from the place where the young man had stopped before Young Wild West and his friends.

"What is that galoot tryin' ter tell yer, young feller?" called out one. "He's a blamed sneak-thief, that's what he is! We let him stop with us last night, an' we grubbed him an' let him have our water. Then he turns around the first chance he gets an' steals our money. He put it in a buckskin bag what he has got tied around him, under his clothes."

"I never stole a cent from them!" protested the young fellow. "I have a bag of money tied to a belt, I know, but that money is mine. They want to get it, but I made up my mind that they should not have it, so I rode away from them, hoping that my horse would outdistance them."

The three men now rode up.

Evidently they thought that their intended victim would be turned over to them, and that they would get the bag of money.

But if they did they were badly mistaken.

Young Wild West was a pretty good judge of people in general.

It took him but a minute to decide which he would believe.

He felt certain that the young man was honest and truthful.

The three rough-looking men had anything but the appearance of being either.

"I guess you fellows had better turn around and see how fast you can ride away from here!" he said calmly, as he let his revolver come around, so it covered them.

"What do yer mean, youngster?" demanded one of them, who acted as though he was the leader.

He looked surprised when he asked the question.

"I mean just what I say," was the reply. "You fellows are no good—I can see that."

The three men bristled up instantly.

"That don't sound very good from a boy," said the leader.

"Don't it? I'll get a man to say it to you if you would like it better."

"I'm the man as will say it ter yer, yer measly coyotes! Jest look pleasant now. If yer don't I'll begin ter pump yer lead into your carcasses!"

The ruffians halted right away.

"Now, then, do just as I told you to!" exclaimed Young

Wild West, the same calm smile playing about his lips. "I want you to light out! Do you hear?"

"All right, young feller; you've got ter drop on us, so we've got ter go. But jest wait! Our time will come afore long!"

"No threats, please. I don't like them. Besides, I might take a notion to show you how straight I can shoot."

"I don't believe you could hit the broad side of a shanty." Crack!

The words were scarcely out of his mouth when Wild's revolver spoke.

"Wow!" yelled the man, clapping his hand to the top of his head and dancing about like a wounded coyote.

The bullet had gone through the crown of his hat and took off a lock of hair.

It must have been that he felt it graze his scalp, too, for he plainly was stung a little.

The villain made for his horse.

He was the only one of the three who had dismounted, and it was evident that he was sorry that he had done it.

"Hold on a minute!"

The words were spoken in a voice that was full of meaning.

He stopped in his tracks.

"You said you didn't believe I could hit the side of a shanty, didn't you?"

"I'll take it back," whined the wretch.

"You don't have to. I am going to show you that I can do better than hitting the side of a shanty. I just cut your hair for you; now I am going to trim your whiskers. Throw up your chin and hold your head well back."

The fellow looked aghast.

His companions acted as though they were going to ride away and leave him, for they saw that they were covered by Charlie and Jim, and it was not good policy for them to interfere just then.

But the scout commanded them to stay just where they were.

"You're about as sick a lot of galoots as I've seen in a month!" he declared. "There yer are, with six-shooters in your belts, an' yer don't dare ter put your hands on 'em! You're beautes, you are!"

The two men certainly looked it, too.

But they had no chance, whatever, so that made a difference.

Meanwhile the leader had been standing right still.

"Are you going to do what I told you?" Wild asked sternly.

"What do yer want me ter do?" he questioned.

"Throw back your head and stick out your chin. I am going to trim your whiskers."

"Yer ain't goin' ter shoot at me, are yer?"

"I am just going to trim your whiskers a bit with a bullet. Do as I say, or I'll start in and shoot off your eyebrows!"

The villain no longer hesitated.

He threw back his head and his chin beard stuck out almost straight before him.

Crack!

The sharp report of the young deadshot's revolver rang out and a tuft of hair flew from the end of the man's beard.

"Now do you think I could hit the side of a shanty?" asked Wild.

"I reckon you could hit about anything yer shot at, young feller," was the reply.

"That sounds better. Now you can go."

"Thankee," said the fellow humbly. "If yer don't mind, I'd like ter know yer name."

"My name is Young Wild West."

"All right. You're ther quickest an' best shot I ever seen. Good-by till we meet ag'in!"

"Get on your horse and light out."

But he did not need to be told that.

He got in the saddle in a hurry, and without another word turned and rode away behind his two companions.

"I guess that settles them for a while," observed our hero, turning to the young man, who had been chased straight to the camp. "Now, you may tell your story, if you like, stranger."

"There isn't much to tell," was the reply. "I was on my way to the new gold fields when I came across those fellows. This was yesterday. I didn't like their looks much, but they offered to take me in with them, and being without food and water, I gladly accepted their invitation. It was not until to-day that I found out that they were scoundrels."

They asked me to lend them some money, and when I told them that I would pay them for what I had been supplied with by them, they said I must give them all I had. I didn't want to do that, so after a row between us I rode off. They were heading for the woods here when the row started, and I thought if I could get there ahead of them I might throw them off my track."

"But yer nag wasn't fast enough ter do it," spoke up the scout, as he looked at the lean broncho the young man had been riding.

"No; it is not a very good horse that I bought when I started from Phoenix, but it was about the best I could get. There seemed to be a big demand for horses just then."

Then the stranger said that his name was Leon Brown, and that he was a painter by trade.

He had come West to seek his fortune, so he said, but so far he had failed to find it, or any port of it.

"I had an idea that I might strike it rich when I got to Gold Gorge," he added. "There is tons of gold to be dug out there, so I heard."

"When you get there you will find it quite different from what you have been led to believe, I guess," remarked Wild, with a laugh. "Gold mining is about as uncertain as any other speculation, and a little more so. You might strike it rich at the first go-off, but it is only one chance in a hundred that a fellow has, especially a tenderfoot."

"I know I am what you folks call a tenderfoot," answered Brown, looking at the girls and turning red. "But there are lots of young fellows who have come West and got very rich."

"But more what didn't," spoke up Cheyenne Charlie, grinning. "Some of 'em died with their boots on, too, an' their folks in ther East never knowed what become of 'em. I reckon there's more fellers lookin' fur gold than what there is of ther gold to be found."

"Well, I am here now, so I will see the thing through and do the best I can."

"That's the way to talk!" exclaimed Jim Dart. "Grit is the article that counts every time."

"Can I stop with you folks to-night?" Leon Brown asked, looking in the direction the three men had gone, and showing signs of great uneasiness.

"Certainly you can," replied Young Wild West. "You can ride right into Gold Gorge with us. We hope to get there before sunset to-morrow."

The tenderfoot thanked them warmly.

Then he proceeded to make himself at home.

Wing, the cook, fixed up some supper for him, and he ate heartily.

Wild told him who they were, and then Brown expressed his surprise at meeting ladies in that wild country.

But when he was told that they were used to it, and liked it better than the cities and towns, he nodded and said he thought they were right.

Though a good watch was kept that night it proved hardly necessary, for the three men did not show up again.

Young Wild West and his friends were up soon after sunrise, and after a breakfast of broiled bear meat, corn cakes and coffee they were ready to resume the journey to Gold Gorge.

"If I was as cool and brave as you are, and knew how to handle a revolver half as good, I would consider that I was able to cope with almost any one," Leon Brown observed, as they were mounting their horses.

"Well, it takes practice to learn how to shoot well," replied Wild, to whom the remark was made. "Coolness can be learned, too, as you will find out if you try good and hard."

"I don't agree with you on that," was the retort, as the young man shook his head. "I think coolness has to be born in a person."

"Well, to some extent, perhaps it has, but any one can do a little better in that line than he has been doing, providing that he makes up his mind."

"And a girl can do the same," said Arietta, who was riding at the side of her dashing young lover at the head of the column.

The young tenderfoot laughed.

"Well, I shan't dispute your word," he answered. "But I will say that I think that all girls are not alike."

The traveling was pretty good now, so they had quite a pleasant time of it.

The shade from the trees was far different from riding

in the scorching sun, as they had been compelled to do the two days before.

Less than an hour after they left the camping place Charlie found the tracks of a bear, and calling the two Chinamen to get down off their horses and follow him, dismounted and started to follow the tracks.

"A little bear meat always comes in handy, I reckon," he said, as he walked away in the bushes, while the rest came to a halt and waited.

"Can I go with you?" Leon Brown asked.

"I reckon so. Come on!" was the reply.

The tenderfoot was glad to have the chance.

He was not provided with a rifle, but he had a pretty good revolver, and taking it from the holster, he hastened after them.

Charlie did not want Hop and Wing to help him kill the bear.

He simply wanted them to carry the parts of it that were the best to eat after he had shot it.

It so happened that they did not have to go more than a couple of hundred yards when Bruin was sighted.

He was a black bear, and the scout nodded when he saw that the animal had hardly attained its growth.

"Fine meat on them haunches," he muttered.

Then he raised his rifle to his shoulder, and brought the bear down.

The echoes of the report had scarcely died out when Hop and Wing rushed to the spot.

Wing got there first, knife in hand, for the purpose of bleeding the bear.

But just then another shot sounded close at hand, and the Chinaman uttered a yell and tumbled over upon the carcass of the dying bear!

"Some galoot has shot ther heathen!" exclaimed the scout and then he quickly fired a shot at a clump of bushes from which a faint stream of smoke was rising.

A cry of pain rang out instantly.

CHAPTER III.

AN ALLIANCE OF VILLAINS.

The three men who had tried to rob Leon Brown, and then got more than they were looking for from Young Wild West and his partners, had never been to Gold Gorge.

They were simply going there for the purpose of striking it rich after the lucky ones had made their piles, which means that they intended to rob them.

After getting out of sight of the camp of our friends, the leader turned to the two with him and exclaimed:

"That was putty tough, wasn't it, boys?"

"I reckon it was, Dick," one of them answered.

"Well, jest as sure as my name are Dick Johnson I'll git square on ther young galoot!"

The others, who, by the way, went by the names of Smart Ned and Hocus, nodded their heads.

"Right yer are, Dick," the latter said.

"We're on ther way ter Gold George ter git rich, ther same as every one else is," went on the leader. "We don't intend ter do any hard work fur what we git, though. We're goin' ter let others do ther hard work, an' we'll take ther benefit."

"That's what's ther matter!" the two exclaimed simultaneously.

"Young Wild West is what ther young galoot called himself," went on Johnson. "He's only a boy, but I reckon he beats any man what I ever run up ag'in. He sartinly kin shoot, an' no mistake! I kin feel ther top of my head burnin' yet from that first bullet he let go; an' look at my beautiful whiskers! He's spiled ther cut of 'em, blamed if he ain't!"

"He could have trimmed your eyebrows, too, most likely. He said as how he could," remarked Smart Ned, just the vestige of a grin on his ugly face.

"None of your smartness, now, Ned," spoke up Johnson. "You jest said that ter make fun of me."

"No, I didn't, Dick. It sorter sounded comical like after I said it, an' I couldn't help from smilin'."

"Well, all right. But if Young Wild West takes a couple of shots at you, like he did at me, I reckon you won't feel much like grinnin'."

"I know I won't, Dick."

"Yer kin bet your life he won't!" exclaimed Hocus.

They did not ride more than ten miles from the camp of our friends when they came to a spot where there was water, and which was very suitable for camping.

It was not much of a camping outfit that the three villains had, so they soon were making themselves comfortable and cooking some bacon and coffee.

A couple of blankets apiece and a few cooking utensils, and some provisions and water jugs was all they were supplied with.

They each had a rifle and plenty of ammunition, so they were in no danger of going hungry, providing they could shoot sufficiently straight to kill game.

"We'll stay here till mornin', an' then we'll go ahead ter Gold Gorge an' try an' find a couple of galoots what'll jine in with us ter clean out Young Wild West an' his gang when they git there. Ther sight of them putty gals oughter be enough ter make some of ther galoots agree ter take a hand in ther game," Dick Johnson remarked, as he helped himself to a big slice of bacon from the fire.

"I reckon them gals shoot, too, if they take a notion. I seen that one of 'em was jest about ready ter pick up her rifle what was standin' ag'in a tree," spoke up Hocus.

"Yer mean ther one with ther reddish hair, don't yer?" queried Smart Ned.

"Yes, that's ther one. She was a beauty, wasn't she?"

"I reckon so; an' she is most likely a beauty yet. 'Tain't likely that she's changed much in ther last half-hour or so." Johnson laughed at this.

"You two galoots is great ones," he remarked. "But layin' all jokin' aside, don't yer think we could git somebody to help us when we git ter Gold Gorge?"

"I'll gamble that we kin!" retorted Hocus.

"It would be a sure bet, if yer made it," added Smart Ned. "Jest tell a couple of galoots that there was money an' three fine-lookin' gals ter be picked up, an' they'd fall right inter ther game in a hurry. Of course, we want ter know putty well what kind of galoots we're talkin' ter first."

"It won't take long ter pick up ther ones we want," said the leader.

The three villains sat talking over what they proposed to do when they got to their destination until they grew sleepy.

Then they saw that their horses were fixed so they could not stray away, and turned in.

They had no fear that they would be bothered during the night.

They did not rise as early as did our friends, and when they had cooked their breakfast Young Wild West's party was very close to them, on the way to Gold Gorge.

The villains had just got their horses ready to mount when they suddenly saw a bear making his way along the edge of the bushes about a hundred yards away.

"If we wanted some meat now there would be our chance," remarked Hocus.

"That's right," answered Johnson. "But we don't want ter bother with no bear jest now."

Just then a report rang out, and they saw the bear give a leap and then fall to the ground.

The next minute they saw a Chinaman running for the carcass, knife in hand.

"Git ther horses out of ther way, in case they shoot," said Hocus quickly. "I'm goin' ter take a shot at ther Chinaman."

His companions did as he said in a hurry, and dropping behind a clump of bushes, he took aim and pulled the trigger.

The report had scarcely died out when another one sounded, and Hocus uttered a yell.

A bullet had grazed his arm, drawing the blood.

He bounded from the bushes to his horse in a hurry, and mounting, rode after his companions, who were already on the move.

"Did yer git hit, Hocus?" asked Johnson, as the villain dashed up beside them.

"I reckon I had a mighty close shave," was the retort. "Keep right on goin'! One of ther galoots must have seen me, an' he give it ter me putty quick."

They did not have to be told to keep on going, for the companions of Hocus had no desire to get a bullet from Young Wild West.

They kept right on the trail for Gold Gorge at a pace that was hard on the horses, considering the heat.

When they finally came to a halt to give them a breathing spell they were expecting every minute to hear the sounds of pursuit, for Hocus had seen the Chinaman drop when he fired, and he thought surely that he had killed him.

But nothing was heard, and as the minutes passed by they began to feel easier.

"I reckon they don't think we come this way," said Johnson. "I s'pose they think we turned back an' went ther other way, 'cause that was ther way we was headin' when we left ther camp, where they was, last night. It ain't likely they think it was one of us what shot ther heathen."

"I hope that's right," answered Smart Ned.

"Well, if it ain't right, if we kin only git ter Gold Gorge ahead of 'em, an' find some galoots there what will stick ter us we'll be all right, anyway."

The villains kept right on their way, halting now and then to rest their horses, but not long enough to make a fire and cook a meal, and finally, about three in the afternoon, they reached the mining camp.

Gold Gorge was not much of a place, though when they got there they found there was considerable of a hustle on, and that shanties were going up like mushrooms.

It was in the wide mouth of a gorge that the gold had been found; hence the name of the place.

As the three villains supposed, there were already places where liquor was sold, while on the front of two of the larger shanties were signs indicating that they were licensed gambling houses.

Dick Johnson chose the toughest-looking place there was to be seen to stop at, because he knew that he would most likely find the kind of men he wanted there.

As the men who had come to the camp to search for their fortunes were mostly at work digging and sifting dirt in search of gold deposits, there were very few to be seen around.

However, there were three or four idle fellows sitting on benches in front of the saloon, and they eyed the three strangers expectantly as they dismounted.

"Come in an' have a drink, boys," said Dick Johnson, nodding to them familiarly.

They seemed glad of the invitation, and followed the villains into the roughly furnished barroom in a hurry.

A man with a very low forehead and piercing black eyes got up lazily from a chair and walked behind the board counter.

"What kin I do fur yer, gents?" he asked.

"A little of your best tanglefoot fur me!" answered Johnson. "I don't know what ther rest want, but they kin take jest what they like."

They all said they would take the same, so the bottle and glasses were put out.

"Help yourselves, boys," Johnson said, nodding to the men he had invited in.

They did so, and then he followed suit, and pushed the bottle along to Smart Ned and Hocus.

"Strangers here, I reckon?" said the proprietor, questioningly.

"Yes," replied Johnson. "What sort of a place is it here, anyhow? Lots of dust ter be found, I s'pose?"

"Nothing ter brag of, though I can't say but what my business is good, and has been ever since I struck here three weeks ago."

Johnson looked at the men he had treated.

There were four of them, and they did not look as though they were very prosperous.

"I reckon you ain't struck it rich yet, boys," he remarked.

"Oh, they don't believe in work, anyway," spoke up the man behind the bar, grinning at them. "They want ter make their boodle easier than handlin' a pick an' shovel."

"Well, I never was much a hand fur hard work myself," and the leader of the gang that had tried to rob the tenderfoot chuckled.

"I reckon I've got enough money ter treat, anyhow," said one of them. "What are yer goin' ter take, strangers? Ther same is good enough fur me."

They had the drink, and then Hocus and Smart Ned each treated.

Then they got in a conversation and soon found out the names of each other.

One of the four men bore the name of Baldy Jones, and when he introduced him the saloon man assured the three that Baldy Jones had never been known to do a hard day's work, or wear a decent shirt and trousers; yet he always had plenty of money.

This was said in a significant way, and when he looked at the man Dick Johnson made up his mind that he was just the kind of a fellow they wanted.

They went into a back room of the place, and then got quite friendly.

Johnson came up pretty blunt, and told the four men that he and his companions did not come there to mine, but that they expected to make plenty of money at Gold Gorge.

"I reckon you'll have ter steal it, then," was Baldy Jones' reply.

"Is that ther way you git yours?" Johnson queried, with a grin.

"If I told you I reckon you'd know as much about it as I do."

Baldy did not get mad; he laughed good-naturedly instead.

Then Johnson grinned some more.

In that way they got to understand each other.

Whisky will make men confide in each other sometimes, and in this case it worked that way.

Baldy Jones and his three companions soon found out that the three strangers were about of the same stamp as they were.

The result was that they heard all about what had happened on the trail.

Johnson made them think that there was a big pile of money in the possession of Young Wild West and his friends, and he took pains to relate how pretty the three girls were.

"I reckon we'll help 'em out, won't we, boys?" said Baldy Jones to his three partners, who, like him, never did any work.

They answered in the affirmative.

It was about an hour after their arrival at Gold Gorge when the alliance against our hero was perfected, and it was just then that he arrived in the camp, riding ahead with Arietta.

"There they are!" exclaimed Johnson, as they rode past the saloon. "What do yer think of 'em, boys?"

"A likely lookin' lot, especially ther gals," answered Baldy Jones, nodding and grinning in a way that told that he meant to know them better before they got out of Gold Gorge.

And he was to know them better, too, but perhaps not in the way he thought he would.

CHAPTER IV.

OUR FRIENDS ARRIVE AT GOLD GORGE.

It was just about four in the afternoon when Young Wild West and his friends arrived at Gold Gorge.

Wing Wah had not been hit by Hocus when he fired.

The bullet had whistled by his ear so close that he dropped from fright.

He got up almost as soon as Cheyenne Charlie fired.

The scout no sooner saw that the Chinaman was unhurt than he rushed for the clump of bushes he had fired into.

He was just in time to hear the sound of receding hoofs, and then he knew it was no use.

So when the rest came up the bear was skinned and cut up, and then they proceeded on the way to the mining camp.

It was easy enough for them to tell that the three outlaws had just gone on ahead of them, for the hoofprints were fresh.

Wild was on the lookout for the villains when they rode up the single crooked street the camp contained.

But they could not be seen, for they were peeping from a window of the saloon.

"There is no use in trying to put up at a hotel," said Wild. "We will ride right on through and look for a place to camp at the other side."

This they did, the few who were hanging around and not working looking at them with interest as they passed the shanties.

There were very few women at Gold Gorge, so the miners were interested when they saw that some more had arrived.

They thought, of course, that our friends had come for the purpose of locating there permanently.

There happened to be a miner, who had really struck it rich and wanted to sell out cheap.

His name was Wurzel, and he had located his claim a quarter of a mile outside the mouth of the gorge.

When he saw our friends riding in he promptly spoke to them.

"Goin' ter locate here?" he asked.

"For a while," Wild answered, as he reined in his horse.

"Well, I've got a claim with a shanty on it that I'll sell dirt cheap. Ther land ain't worth nothin', I reckon, since I took out all there was in ther pocket, an' I've got thirty thousand dollars in ther bank at Phoenix. I'll sell out fur just about what ther shanty and claim an' what's in it is worth. I was one of the first galoots ter find gold here, an' I got in an' made my pile right on ther jump. There ain't no one as wants ter buy me out, 'cause they've heard that I was goin' ter Californy, an' then there'll be a fight fur ther shanty, I reckon."

He then told his name and showed the bank-book he had.

"Well, Mr. Wurzel," said our hero, "just pilot us to your shanty. If you will sell out as cheap as it would cost us to build a shanty we'll buy. We don't have to have a shanty to live in, though, for we are used to camping."

"Well, I reckon a shanty is ther best place ter sleep in around these diggin's," was the reply. "There's more thieves here than there is honest people, I believe. That is ther main reason that I'm goin' ter light out from Gold Gorge. I'm lucky that I've got my pile in ther bank over in Phoenix."

"I reckon yer are, old man," spoke up Cheyenne Charlie. "We met three galoots last night that was headin' fur here, an' I'll bet they would rob a blind man. Have yer seen three strangers come in this afternoon?"

"Yes, I seen 'em. They're stoppin' at ther saloon what's run by Baldy Jones, which is ther worst place in ther camp. There's more shootin' an' killin' goin' on in that place than all the rest put together."

"Well, it is like every other new mining camp, I suppose. There has always got to be a 'worst' place in it," said Wild.

The miner walked along with them until they came to his shanty.

It was situated around to the rear of the gathering of shanties, right in the gulch.

High cliffs reared on either side of it, and in the rear the gorge wound itself back into the mountains.

"There was an idee among ther galoots what come here that there was plenty of gold back inter ther gulch," Wurzel said, as he pointed back to the wilderness of the scene. "but there ain't been as much as an ounce took out there. Right here I struck it rich, but ther pocket soon give out. Others has struck it putty good farther out, where yer see ther men workin' there. I reckon there ain't many as will do as well as I've done, though."

The man seemed very proud of the fact that he had thirty thousand dollars to his credit in the bank at Phoenix.

He was one of the sort that are satisfied with enough to see them through, and did not keep longing for more.

He had everything ready to vacate the shanty at a moment's notice, and when he put the price on it Wild took him up without any further talk.

He had not intended to buy a shanty, but he felt certain that he could more than double his money when they got ready to leave the Gorge.

The transfer was soon made and the money paid, and then our friends took possession, Wurzel taking up his quarters at the shanty boarding-house until he could leave with the stage when it went out two days later.

"Well, I guess this is not so bad," observed our hero, as the two Chinamen busied themselves cleaning the interior of the shanty and gettin' it into shape. "We'll stay here a while—for three or four days, anyhow. I have an idea in that time that something will turn up in our favor. We will be lucky enough, probably, to strike some more gold here, and if we do we will soon find a customer to buy the shanty and claim."

"If we don't find more gold here it will be something unusual," spoke up Arietta. "Every time you have ever bought a claim that was supposed to be worked out you have always been lucky enough to find something left on it that was overlocked."

"That is so, Et. Well, I'll leave it to you to find a pocket on the land. Just try and see what you can do to-morrow."

"Oh, I don't need to be told. I'll be looking sharp for it."

It was near sunset by the time Hop and Wing had things in shape.

Cheyenne Charlie had rigged up a sort of rack from loosely cut saplings to hang up the haunches of bear meat.

He salted them and then hung them up, after which he started a fire under them to smoke them.

The process not only preserved the meat, but it gave it a flavor that was agreeable.

"I guess we won't have any of the bear for supper. The animal meat is not out of it yet," Jim Dart explained to Leon Brown, who acted as though he thought the scout was cooking the meat in a rather queer sort of a way.

"Oh, I see," he answered. "He is simply smoking it. I thought it rather strange that he was going to cook the whole lot for one meal."

Charlie laughed when he heard this remark.

"You're a real tenderfoot, I reckon," he remarked. "You'll learn a whole lot if yer stay in ther West a while, young feller."

"Well, I intend to stay. I am more than glad I met you felks, too. I expect you to advise me as to the best way to go about it to make my fortune."

The scout laughed again.

"Plenty of hard work, lots of savin', an' a little good luck thrown in will make any one rich," he said.

"Never mind what he is telling you, Brown," spoke up Young Wild West. "He don't mean to discourage you by talking that way."

"Oh, I am not going to get discouraged until I haven't a cent left to buy something to eat," was the reply. "I always was a pretty gritty sort of a fellow when there was work around, but I got it in my head that I could make more money hunting for gold than I could at painting houses. That is why I gave up the painting business and came to Arizona."

"Well, you stay right with us, and in the morning we will try and pick out a claim for you," our hero told him. "I guess you will manage to live. If you don't strike anything here by the time we go away you can go with us, and I will see to it that you get a good job at one of our mines. We are going to make a general inspection of the mines and ranches we own throughout the West, and it is most likely I can manage to place you somewhere."

"Thank you," was the reply.

It was getting dark by the time they had finished their supper.

"Brown," said Wild, addressing the tenderfoot, "I guess you and I will take a walk over to the store and saloons and see if the three rascals who tried so hard to rob you are around."

"Very well," was the reply. "I am sure I will not feel afraid of them while I am with you."

"Oh, it is hardly probable that they would attempt to rob you again if you were alone. They are strangers here, and until they get acquainted with men of their own class they won't attempt to bother any one. They won't run the risk of getting shot, for somebody would be sure to take your part."

Charlie and Jim would no doubt have been glad to take a walk around and see the camp, but as Wild had not asked them, they said nothing.

Anyhow, they knew that it was best for some one to stay at the shanty with the girls, for there was no telling but that some of the bad element of the mining camp might take a notion to come out there and insult them.

Wild and the tenderfoot started leisurely for the thickly settled part of the camp.

Oil lamps were now burning in front of the public places, but few of the shanties were lighted up, showing that the miners who occupied them were not in the habit of staying at home evenings.

"I suppose we will find quite a crowd over there, Brown," said our hero. "Did you see to it that your shooter was loaded properly and in shooting order?"

"My shooter is in fine order, Mr. West," was the reply. "But do you think I will have to use it to-night?"

"There is no telling what may happen before we get back to the shanty. If I am bothered in a place I have never been before I always make it a point to show the bad men that I have a way of taking care of myself. It don't do to let them think you are afraid of them, you know. If a fellow does that he may as well light out for some other place right away, for they will surely lead him a hard life if he don't."

"Well, I hope we won't have any trouble. But if I thought we were going to have I would go with you just the same, Mr. West."

"See here, Brown, don't 'mister' me, please. I am a few years younger than you, and I have taken the privilege of calling you by your last name because that is the style in this part of the country. You can call me Wild, as all my

friends do. I consider you my friend, so you may as well do as the rest do."

"Very well, Wild. Brown is the name I was generally called by my friends at home, so you have just struck it right. I will answer to it quicker than any other name."

It was less than a quarter of a mile to the heart of the mining camp, so they were soon there.

The three drinking and gambling places were doing a rushing business, and there were quite a number of men loitering in front of them.

The population of Gold Gorge was not more than seventy people, but more were coming every day, and if it kept up the same as it had been averaging the past three weeks there would be at least three hundred there in two more.

Wild was not looking for trouble, but he chose the worst-looking saloon to pay the first call at.

His practiced eye told him which was the one that was the general headquarters for the worst element of the camp, for looks are not deceiving in such cases.

As they started to enter the shanty saloon they were forced to clamber over the feet of two or three men who were seated on boxes, their limbs stretched out regardless of whom they interfered with.

One of the men was a big raw-boned fellow, who was chewing tobacco and spitting right and left.

Whether he did it intentionally or not, he let a mouthful of tobacco-juice hit Wild on the foot as he was stepping over his feet.

The young deadshot stopped and looked at him coolly.

"What's ther matter, young feller?" the man said, leering at him.

"Did you do that on purpose?" Wild asked in an easy tone of voice.

"I reckon it might have been a mistake," was the re'ort.

"Then you ought to apologize."

"What!" cried the big miner, jumping to his feet with wonderful quickness.

"I guess you heard what I said."

The man was standing so the light from the oil lamp fell full upon his tanned face, and our hero could see that he was astonished.

But if he was astonished at the way the boy spoke he was destined to be astounded before he got through with him.

CHAPTER V.

GOOSEBERRY IKE DECIDES TO REFORM.

"You think I oughter 'pologize, did yer say?" cried the miner, leaning his face over so it was within a foot of our hero's.

"Yes, that is what I think. If you spat upon my foot accidentally you should say something to let me know that you did not intend it. That is the way to do business."

"S'pose I was to tell yer that I spit on yer on purpose—what then?"

"Oh, then I would make you wipe it off."

"Yer would what?"

"I would make you wipe it off—like that!" and coming to the conclusion that he might as well have it over with as soon as possible, Wild let go the foot that had been sprinkled with the tobacco-juice and wiped it off on the man, and gave the miner a stiff kick at the same time.

The man was almost lifted off his feet, for Wild never did such things by halves.

A cry of amazement went up from the bystanders, for none of them expected to see anything like that happen, not even when the boy spoke in such a cool and easy way.

And Leon Brown was almost as much surprised as they were.

The tenderfoot thought there was surely going to be a shooting match now.

He got his hand on the butt of his revolver, for he was pretty gritty.

"Whoop! Wow!" yelled the miner, as soon as he could find the use of his voice.

His hand slid for the butt of a revolver that hung at his side. He got hold of the weapon and had it out of the holster just as Wild made another lightning-like kick.

The revolver went flying through the air and hit the side of the shanty saloon with a thud.

"I guess you don't want to do any shooting, my friend,"

came from the lips of the boy in a tone of voice that was nothing if not cool and easy. "If you do want to you can't, for I am not going to let you."

A sound like that of the bellow of a maddened bull came from the burly miner, and he leaped forward to grab the boy.

Spat!

Wild's fist shot out straight from the shoulder, and down went the man in a heap.

It did not seem possible that one so young could strike such a heavy blow, but he certainly did fell the miner as flat as though he had hit him with an axe.

But Young Wild West was strong and powerful, and he always was in training, too.

His harding-hitting, coolness and quickness had pulled him out of many similar scrapes, and he was not the least bit worried as to how the contest would end.

"You are nothing more than a big bluffer!" exclaimed the dashing young deadshot. "I am going to make you say you are sorry you spat on my foot if I have to thrash you within an inch of your life to make you do it. Now, if you want to fight before you do it get up and take your medicine!"

The men gathered about were, for the most part, villainous-looking, but none of them offered to interfere.

Brown scanned them closely, and when he saw that the three villains who had tried to rob him were among them he feared that Wild would get killed.

Dick Johnson and his two men stood near the open door of the saloon, as they had come out on hearing the disturbance.

But they did not offer to take a hand in the fight.

The miner got up in a dazed sort of a way.

"What did he hit me with, boys?" he asked in a faltering voice, as he looked around at the crowd.

"With his fist," somebody answered.

"All right, then. I've got enough! I wasn't brought up among hogs, an' I know when I've got enough, an' don't yer furgit it!"

"So you think you have got enough, then?" Wild asked, as he stood before the man, his arms folded cross his breast.

"Yes, young feller. If you knocked me down with your fist I've sartinly got enough. If it was a crowbar that yer done it with I'd be lookin' fur satisfaction."

"Well, I guess it wasn't such a very hard thing to do," the boy said, with a smile. "I have knocked down bigger men than you are. All that's necessary to do it is to catch a fellow when he's rushing for you, and let your weight go with the blow. He's bound to drop every time."

"I reckon so. Well, young feller, I'm sorry that I spit on your foot, an' if there's any galoot around here what thinks I'm a coward fur sayin' so, I'm ready ter lick him!"

It was evident that the miner was quite well respected by his associates, for no one said a word.

"I guess you are not so bad as you made out you were," remarked our hero, as he led the way into the saloon. "Come and have a cigar with me."

"I'll do that, young feller. But what kin I call yer?"

"Young Wild West is my name."

"Good enough! My handle is Gooseberry Ike, an' I'm s'posed ter be ther Top-Notcher of Gold Gorge. But it's all right, Young Wild West. You knocked me down with a shot from your fist, an' I'll take off my hat ter any one as kin do that every time."

Leon Brown went in with Wild and the miner.

He took notice of the fact that his three enemies had preceded them, and he nudged our hero and whispered for him to look out for them.

"That's all right," Wild returned. "I am watching them all the time. You keep your eyes on them, though try and not let them know that you are paying any more than ordinary attention to them."

Johnson and his pals were now with the four men they had fallen in with that afternoon.

They sat at a table near the further end of the bar, and as our hero stepped up with the man he had tamed so thoroughly they were eyed keenly by the villains Johnson had got to take sides with him.

Wild cast a glance at them which told them all quite plainly that he was ready for them.

"Let us have the best cigar you've got in the house," Wild said to the proprietor.

That individual had been told who he was by the villainous gang, and as he had witnessed the wallowing Gooseberry

Ike had received at the hands of the boy he was more than pleasant to him.

"Sartin," he replied, as he took pains to pry open the lid of a fresh box of cigars. "Ther best ain't none too good fur Young Wild West."

"I reckon yer said that right, if yer never said anything else, Baxter," observed Gooseberry Ike, as he took one of the cigars. "This are ther first time I ever took a cigar when I was treated in this place. I always calls fur tanglefoot, an' when I smokes I use a pipe. But this here is a special occasion. Here's luck ter yer, Young Wild West!"

Wild nodded, and when the miner had lighted his cigar he puffed away just as though nothing had happened.

"Now," said he, "I reckon we'll have a little drink, boys. What'll yer have, Young Wild West?"

"I'll have a temperance drink, I guess. You see, I have never formed the habit of drinking whisky. I don't think it would do me any good, so I won't bother to try it."

"Ain't got nothin' but whisky an' gin an' water in ther shebang," Baldy declared, looking surprised at hearing that there was one person in the place who did not drink liquor.

"Well, I'll have a cigar, and I'll smoke it some other time, then."

"Good enough!" said Gooseberry Ike. "Ther tenderfoot is goin' ter jine me in swallerin' a little juice, I see. Well, here's luck!"

He and Brown drank, and then the latter insisted on treating.

At this juncture Baldy Jones, the leader of the four rascals who had associated themselves with Johnson and his pals, stepped up.

He was looking for trouble.

"Say, you measly tenderfoot!" he exclaimed, laying his hand on Brown's shoulder, "don't yer know what ther custom is in these here diggin's?"

"No; what is the custom?" the young man queried, surprised, but not much afraid.

"When a tenderfoot treats he always asks everybody what's in ther room."

Brown acted as though he was going to humor him and ask them all, but Wild interfered.

"My friend," said he, "don't you know that a fellow hasn't always the price to pay for a round of drinks? I hardly think that this young man has any more money than he needs to fit himself out for mining. I guess you had better forget about the custom, and go and sit down with the gang you were talking to."

Baldy Jones had expressed himself to his companions as being eager to get a chance at Young Wild West.

He now had the chance.

An angry gleam came in the eyes of Baldy Jones.

"I reckon you're about ther sassiest young galoot I ever come across," he said. "Now you jest take my advice an' git out of my way, or I'll chuck you out of ther place."

"You can't throw me out of this place, nor no other man that is now in it!" was the calm retort. "I never have been thrown out of a place yet, and I don't mean to now. You go and sit down to that table over there!"

Then the villain made a grab to catch Wild by the shoulders.

Biff!

He received a blow on the chest that sent him staggering back to the very chair he had got up from.

Flop!

He sat down in it just as if he had tried to.

This was the signal for a general hot time, but it was nipped in the bud.

The villain called Smart Ned managed to get out his shooter, but it never did him any good, for Young Wild West, with his usual quickness, first fired.

As the scoundrel rolled over and fell to the floor the dashing young deadshot flashed a glance around the room and exclaimed:

"That gang at that table are no good! Three of them tried to rob the young man I have with me last night, and because I stopped them they want to wing me with a bullet. The galoot that just fell isn't hurt much. I only grazed his shoulder, but he fell as though he got the bullet through his heart."

Nearly everybody present thought the man had been shot dead, and when they heard what the boy said they crowded around him to see if it was true that his shoulder was only grazed.

Gooseberry Ike took hold of the collar of his shirt and lifted him to his chair.

A little stream of crimson was running down the sleeve of Stuart Ned.

"Boys, it is jest as Young Wild West said!" exclaimed the miner. "I reckon he knowed jest where his bullet was goin' ter go."

"I always know that," said Wild, smiling at the surprised miners. "I never pull a trigger until I have what I want to hit covered."

"I reckon ther galoot fell 'cause he was afraid you'd fire ag'in if he didn't," Gooseberry Ike ventured.

Then, looking at Baldy Jones, he added:

"You an' me has been putty good friends since we met here in ther Gorge, but I want ter tell yer now that it ain't goin' ter be that way no longer. You're no good, an' neither is your pards! Yer kin call yerselves my enemies now, if yer want ter, but look out how yer act when you're around me! I wasn't what might be called exactly straight myself, but I'm goin' ter be now!"

"Hooray fur Gooseberry Ike!" yelled a miner near the door.

Leon Brown joined in giving the cheer, but he was the only one.

That showed that every other man in the crowd sympathized with Baldy Jones and his companions.

"It looks to me as though there are nothing but crooks here," said Wild in his easy way. "How many are there here, Brown? Just count them up, will you?"

At this the miner who had proposed the cheer suddenly left.

Either he did not want to be counted as a crook, or he was afraid he might get shot for going against Baldy and the rest.

"There's thirteen of them," the tenderfoot answered, when he had counted them.

"Does that include the man behind the bar?"

"Yes."

"Well, they call thirteen an unlucky number. That means that one of them at least will die with his boots on before to-morrow morning. Which is it to be?"

Wild look around coolly, as though he was trying to pick out some one to shoot.

There was a deathly silence for the space of a minute, and then Dick Johnson answered:

"I ain't got nothin' ag'in you, Young Wild West. You might think I have, but I ain't."

Just then Hop Wah, the Chinaman, walked in, smoking a big black-looking cigar.

His appearance gave the rascals in the saloon a good chance to "crawl," as Westerners speak it when a fellow backs down, and they all turned and looked at the innocent-looking Chinaman.

Hop did not say a word, but taking a small package from beneath his flowing gown, he applied a thin fuse that was attached to it to the end of his cigar, and then calmly dropped it on the floor.

CHAPTER VI.

THREE VILLAINS LESS.

"What's ther matter with ther foolish heathen?" cried Gooseberry Ike, bursting into a laugh as Hop dropped the package on the floor.

No one had time to answer just then, for there was a upff of smoke, followed instantly by a burst of flame, and then a hundred or more fiery serpents shot around the room in every direction!

"Hip-hi!" yelled Hop, as he ran for the door. "Allee samee snakee after um baddde mans!"

The greatest of excitement prevailed.

The miners fell over each other in a mad rush to get out of the saloon.

Leon Brown started to run, but he was caught by the arm by Young Wild West.

"It is all right," our hero whispered in his ear. "Hop is simply playing one of his tricks. He probably thought it was getting too warm for us here, and meant to give us a chance to get out. Come on! we will simply walk out by the back way."

Brown uttered a sigh of relief and led the way out.

He had seen fireworks before, and lots of them, but he never saw a display so unexpectedly.

When they got out they saw men coming through the windows in a struggling mass.

Yells and curses rang out on every hand.

But before the last man got out the fiery snakes dwindled down to here and there a tiny stream of smoke.

As our hero went around and looked into the front door he beheld Hop standing at the bar, rapping upon it with a silver dollar.

"Me wantee buy um dlink!" the Celestial called out. "Hully up!"

The proprietor heard the call, and then he came close to the door and saw him.

"Why don't you go in and serve him?" Wild asked coolly.

"Thunder!" gasped the man.

"What made it happen, anyhow?" asked Gooseberry Ike, stepping up rather gingerly.

"The heathen is not such a fool as you fellows had an idea he was, I guess," Wild replied. "He didn't seem to get frightened at the snakes, for there he stands, waiting to buy some tanglefoot. Gracious! I never saw a house cleaned out so quickly in all my life!"

"An' that heathen galoot done that jest fur ther fun of it, hey?" demanded the proprietor, who was listening to what was said.

"I don't know whether he did it for fun or for fair," answered Wild. "He has a way of doing funny things sometimes. He is a sort of a fellow who can do anything he likes; he is a magician."

"He is, hey? Well, I'll jest yank him by ther pig-tail an' wipe ther floor up with him, that's what I will!"

In rushed the irate proprietor.

He got to within six feet of his intended victim when Hop suddenly thrust out his hand, and a snake about two feet long leaped out of his sleeve, and began to wave before the man.

"Ouch!" yelled the saloonkeeper and out of the place he ran.

Then the snake disappeared up the Chinaman's sleeve as quickly as it came out.

Brown laughed heartily.

"That Chinaman is certainly great!" he exclaimed.

"Come on in," said Wild.

They went inside, and then Gooseberry Ike followed them. Pretty soon the rest began to come in.

Then the proprietor threw aside his fears and came in to attend to business.

Hop smiled at him blandly.

"Velly nicee nightee," he observed.

"I reckon you're a wonderful feller," answered the saloon man. "Where is that snake?"

"Me no undelstand," and Hop looked surprised.

"I seen a snake jump out of your sleeve."

"Me see no snakee."

"Didn't you see the snake?" and the excited man turned to Young Wild West.

"If you don't worry over what you say it might be all the better for you. The first thing you know you will be seeing elephants and monkeys jumping out of his sleeve. Get behind the counter and attend to your business."

The proprietor said no more.

He dealt out what was called for, serving Hop first of all, but he acted as though he had a great worriment on his mind.

It was fully half an hour before the miners got back to their old-time form.

Dick Johnson, Baldy Jones, and the rest of the villainous gang had not come back in the saloon.

They had decided that it was altogether too warm for them there.

Just what the Chinaman had done to make the fiery snakes appear they did not know.

But they were not a little frightened, and were about the first among the crowd to get out.

"I reckon we'd better go over to my shanty," said Baldy, as they stood looking at the crowd hanging around the door of the saloon. "We kin send an' git some whisky, an' then we kin set down an' talk things over. Does your shoulder hurt much, Ned?"

"Only a little," was the reply from the man who had been grazed with a bullet. "It's only a scratch, I reckon."

"I thought it was a blame sight worse nor a scratch when I seen yer tumble from ther chair," spoke up Johnson. "That Young Wild West kin hit jest about where he wants ter,

an' that makes it all ther more necessary fur us ter git him out of ther way as quick as we kin."

They were walking to the shanty of Baldy now, and as it was not very far from the saloon they had just left in such a hurried manner, they soon got there.

It was quite close to another drinking place, too, so Baldy gave one of his men some money and a jug, and told him to go and get it filled.

The villains talked over minor things until the man got back with the jug.

Then, when they all had a taste of its contents, the subject that was uppermost in their minds came up.

"Well," said Baldy, "I reckon that Young Wild West means ter stop in Gold Gorge a while, providin' we let him. He's bought a shanty an' claim from Wurzel, ther galoot what was smart enough ter get out his pile ter Phcenix, an' that means that ther boy an' his gang means ter stay here a while. I reckon they won't make much out of ther claim they got of Wurzel, though, fur there ain't no more pay dirt left on it than yer could put in your eye."

"It ain't likely they give much fur it," ventured one of his men. "I heard him say he would sell ther whole thing fur what ther shanty alone cost him. I did think that he would find no one ter buy it, an' then I might have a chance ter git. I was goin' ter jump ther claim ther minute ther stagecoach started with Wurzel in it."

"An' there was more'n a dozen more thinkin' of doin' ther same thing, I reckon," answered Baldy, as he filled his pipe. "As I jest said, ther claim ain't worth nothin', but ther shanty is. It is a putty good-sized shanty, too, an' I reckon if it got afire to-night it would light up ther Gorge a blamed sight more'n that heathen Chineese lit up ther barroom a little while ago."

Dick Johnson gave a nod of satisfaction and exclaimed:

"By Jove, partner, you've got that right! That shanty has got ter burn this very night. That will be one way of gittin' satisfaction on Young Wild West, won't it, boys?"

"Yer kin bet it will!" said Smart Ned and Hocus in the same breath.

Baldy's men only grinned.

Anything in the line of villainy suited them.

They had no particular grudge against Young Wild West, but that made no difference; they liked to do things that would worry those who did not think as they did.

"It wouldn't be hardly right ter burn up them gals, though," said Johnson, after he had thought for a minute or two.

"I reckon they'd all git out if ther shanty was set on fire," Baldy answered. "There's winders an' a door in it, an' it ain't likely they'd lay there an' be burned up."

"If Young Wild West an' his pards was ter burn up it would be a mighty good thing," spoke up Smart Ned.

"It ain't likely that would happen. I reckon yer ain't catchin' that young galoot a-nappin' much," Baldy put in.

"No sich good luck," added Johnson.

"He sartinly made me understand somethin' I didn't know afore," went on Baldy, shrugging his shoulders.

"What's that?" asked Johnson.

"He made me understand that I wasn't as much as I thought I was. I always did think that I was as much as I thought I was, yer know."

"What kind of a speech is that, anyhow?" queried one of his followers, with a grin.

"Well, I reckon you all know what I mean. Young Wild West is only a boy, but he's sartinly a scorcher when it comes ter fightin'! Why, he knocked Gooseberry Ike down as though he was nothin' more'n a little child, an' he's s'posed ter be ther best an' strongest man in ther Gorge!"

"An' what makes it strange is that, instead of wantin' ter have ther life of Young Wild West fur what he done ter him, he's turned plumb over an' gone on his side!" exclaimed Johnson. "That's ther funniest way of doin' business I ever seen."

"Well, I reckon that Gooseberry Ike will have ter take his medicine, then, that's all," declared Baldy. "He ain't no good, anyhow. I never did like him, 'cause I knowed he could whip me, an' that he was quicker with a gun than I am."

The seven villains, who had banded themselves together for the purpose of putting Young Wild West and his partners out of the way, and then making prisoners of the girls, talked for over an hour on the subject, and finally they reached the conclusion that they would set fire to the shanty

at midnight, and then stand ready to shoot our friends when they came out to escape the flames.

There was no such thing as law in Gold Gorge, for not even a judge had been selected from the men who were there.

The villains talked and drank until midnight, and then they set out to commit the dastardly deed.

Baldy Jones got out a can of coal-oil and remarked, as they were ready to start:

"I reckon this will help things along. All's we've got ter do is ter pick up some dry weeds an' grass on ther way. Then we kin put it under ther shanty an' pour ther oil on it. A match will do ther rest."

The rest nodded and grinned in anticipation of what was to come.

The blazing oil lamps in front of the drinking and gambling resorts lighted up the scene with a sort of glare, but as the seven villains walked away to burn the shanty and kill the males who occupied it if they could, they gradually got lost in the darkness.

They moved around until they reached the left side of the gorge, and then made their way along noiselessly for the lone shanty.

They could see it looming up before them, and they began to breathe hard.

Not one of the villains there but feared that it might not turn out all right, and that something would happen to them.

Yet they tried to make themselves believe that it would be easy to carry out their foul purpose.

There was no light in the shanty, and this was enough to convince them that the occupants were asleep.

They did not know that Young Wild West always made it a point to keep a watch when he knew he had enemies around, whether he was occupying a house or merely camping in a wild spot.

They were to learn this, though, in a very few minutes.

The villains spoke in low whispers now, and the conversation was entirely upon what they hoped to do.

"Do yer think we'll git ther blame of this?" Johnson asked Baldy.

"S'pose we do?" was the laconic retort. "What'll it amount ter? I reckon I've got more friends in ther camp than Gooseberry Ike has. It will be all right if we manage ter vine out Young Wild West an' his partners. There won't be nothin' said about it, an' I'll bet on that!"

So they crept around to the rear of the shanty, Johnson feeling much easier.

"Lemme light ther grass an' ile," whispered Smart Ned. "It'll do me a whole lot of good ter do it, 'cause I'll feel that I'm sartinly gittin' square then."

"All right," answered Baldy. "You kin do ther lightin', an' Ben and Mack will carry ther stuff there ter make ther blaze. The rest of us will git around an' lay fur 'em when they rush out of ther door. We want ter do this up quick, yer know."

It was soon arranged, and the three villains selected to place the combustibles under the shanty and apply the match crept up to the shanty.

The remaining four hurried around so they would have a chance to shoot at our friends from the behind the rocks when they came out.

The man called Ben and Mack pushed the leaves and dry grass under and poured the oil upon it.

Then Smart Ned struck a match to light it.

But at that moment three reports sounded in quick succession, and the three scoundrels rolled over, each pierced by an unerring bullet!

Johnson, Baldy, Hocus and the other man no sooner heard the shots than they turned and ran for their lives.

They knew what had happened without being told.

They did not stop running until they reached the shanty of Baldy, and then they got inside and quickly barred the door.

They had not been there more than five minutes when there came a knock on the door.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PLOT THAT FAILED.

Young Wild West and Leon Brown went back to the shanty pretty well satisfied with their visit to the saloon.

The tenderfoot was a little bit excited over what had happened, but he declared that he had been there so without it all.

When the two reached the shanty they found Hop there ahead of them.

He was seated in a corner conversing with his brother, just as though nothing had happened.

"Hello, Hop!" said Wild, walking up to him and taking hold of his queue. "What made you give the display of fireworks in the saloon?"

"Me outsidee, me listen, and me t'inkee you havee putty muchee lightee; me t'inkee better clean um place oute," was the reply.

"Oh! Well, I guess you did clean it out pretty quick. You about scared the man who runs the place out of his wits. Did he tell you about it?" and Wild turned to his partners and the girls.

"No," was the quick reply.

"What happened, Wild?" asked Arietta, for she could tell by the manner of her lover that something out of the ordinary had occurred.

"Well, we had quite a little excitement, didn't we, Brown?"

"I never experienced anything like it before," was the tenderfoot's reply.

Then Wild related all that had occurred.

"So you made a good man out of a bad one, eh?" remarked the scout's wife. "Well, you are always doing good, it seems."

"I'd jest liked ter have been there!" exclaimed Cheyenne Charlie, with a chuckle. "That heathen kin do more funny things ter ther square inch than any galoot alive, I reckon."

"Gooseberry Ike is going to make us a call in the morning," said our hero, after a pause. "He is a pretty good sort of a fellow, and now that he has decided to quit the bad company he has been traveling with, I have no doubt but that he will come around all right."

"He surely means to be straight—I am certain of that," spoke up Brown. "I could tell by the way he acted. He has made enemies of those fellows who were at the table with the three rascals we had the trouble with last night, though. They will all be down on him because he declared that he was going to be your friend. My! but didn't you hit him hard when you knocked him down! If I could knock a man down as easy as you did him I would not be afraid of the best fighter living."

"Well, I reckon Wild ain't afraid of ther best fighter livin'," Charlie hastened to put in.

"Oh, I know that."

Our friends were pretty well tired out from their tedious journey over the sandy waste and the crooked mountain trail, so they decided to retire early.

There were two rooms in the shanty, and one of them was allotted to the girls.

The male members of the party were used to turning in anywhere, so they lost no time in fixing places to sleep.

Cheyenne Charlie was selected by Wild to stand watch until midnight.

Then Jim would take a turn for three hours, and after that Wild would go on duty himself until morning.

Charlie heard not a sound that would arouse his suspicions until it was a little after twelve o'clock.

Then he heard the sounds made by whispered voices.

He was sitting on the ground at one end of the shanty at the time, in the shadow of the building.

Peering through the darkness in the direction the sounds came from, he distinguished the forms of several men.

They had just halted, and were evidently preparing to approach the shanty.

The scout was all attention instantly.

Without the least hesitation he started to crawl toward the forms in the rear of the shanty.

He had only to go a few feet before he could hear what was being said.

Then he learned that the shanty was to be set on fire.

Charlie could hear the voice of Dick Johnson, and he knew who he was right away.

But he did not linger there, nor did he open fire on the scoundrels.

He got back to the house as quickly as he could.

And once there he quickly awoke Wild and Jim.

He was none too soon in doing this, either.

The three villains were discovered creeping right close to the building as they looked out of the window that was in the rear.

Wild and Jim were now wide awake.

They understood the situation without the scout going into details.

"Boys, those fellows mean to burn us alive," whispered the dashing young deadshot. "They must never get away alive! When the match is struck you know what to do."

That was all that was said, but it was quite enough.

The very next minute three reports rang out.

Each had fired a shot, and each knew just where he was sending a bullet.

Then Young Wild West leaped through the window.

Charlie and Jim followed him in short order, while the rest awoke and wanted to know what was the matter.

Wild found the three men in the last throes of death.

The bullets from their revolvers had gone straight to the mark.

"Light a lantern and hand it out here, some one," said our hero, as he stepped to the window.

Leon Brown was right there, and he soon struck a match and found a lantern.

It was lighted and handed to Wild.

Then the boy held it so its light fell upon the three men.

"Brown," said he, "here are three of the galoots that were sitting at the table in the saloon. One of them is one of the three men who wanted to rob you on the trail last night."

"Are they hurt much?" Brown asked.

"No, they are not hurt at all; they are dead," was the reply.

"Oh!"

"They wanted to burn us to death, but Charlie caught sight of them in time to wake Jim and I. I guess their friends will be a little more careful now."

Brown leaped out of the window and saw that what Wild had told him was true.

"I reckon we'd better see where ther rest of ther galoots is," Charlie said, and then he started off through the darkness.

Wild and Jim followed him.

It was natural that they should head toward the heart of the camp, and as they got out into the mouth of the gorge they caught sight of some men just going into a shanty not far from where the saloons were.

There were no other men to be seen away from the saloons, so our friends knew they had been with those who got shot.

They hurried on, and in a few minutes reached the shanty.

There was a bright light burning inside, so Wild stepped up and peered through the window.

The panes of glass that remained there were covered with dirt and dust, and those that had been broken out were substituted with pieces of boards.

But our hero managed to see well enough to distinguish the forms of the men he supposed had been with the three who had fallen.

"I guess we had better let them know that we are aware that they meant to burn us out, boys," Wild answered. "We won't do anything to them unless they put up a fight, though. There are four of them, and only three of us, but I hardly think they will put up a fight."

"I hope they do," said Cheyenne Charlie, chuckling grimly. "I'm jest in ther humor ter give all sich galoots their medicine, I am!"

"Well, don't shoot unless you see that it can't be helped, Charlie," was the reply.

Then Young Wild West stepped to the door and rapped upon it with the butt of his revolver.

There was no reply to the summons.

He knocked again, this time louder.

"Open the door!" he cried out. "I want to talk to you galoots!"

"Who's there?" came from within.

It was the voice of Baldy Jones, and there was just the least bit of a tremble in it.

"Young Wild West is here," answered our hero. "Just open the door, and the quicker you do it the better it will be for you."

"What are yer routin' a feller out at this time of night fur?" came from the inside of the shanty.

"I am sorry to do it. I suppose you were sound asleep," said Wild, laughing softly to himself. "But I want to see you on important business."

"All right. I'll open up, then."

The next minute the door opened, and Baldy stood before them.

He had removed his boots and stood in his bare feet, evidently for the purpose of making Wild think he had really been asleep.

"What's ther matter?" he asked.

"I am sorry to disturb you," said Wild, leveling his six-shooter at him, "but I want to tell you that three of your friends just got shot at our shanty. They were in the act of setting the shanty on fire when they dropped. I want you and your companions to come and take away the carcasses right away."

"I don't know what yer mean," said Baldy, affecting astonishment.

"Don't you? Well, you heard what I said, didn't you?"

"Yes, I heard yer. But what is ther matter, anyhow?"

The villain rubbed his eyes, as though he was trying to get himself thoroughly awake.

Just then the scout, who felt that he must do something startling, picked up a stone and let it go through the window.

The effect was all that could be desired, for up jumped the other three villains from the floor, where they had been crouching.

"How are you, gentlemen?" said Young Wild West, coolly. "Now I guess you are ready to come and get the three galloos that went under a few minutes ago."

"Who are they what got shot?" asked Baldy Jones, still affecting to be very innocent.

"You ought to know who you sent to do the job. Now no more talk about it. If you are not over after the carcasses inside of ten minutes you will need an undertaker, the same as they do!"

With that, Wild backed away from the door of the shanty and Charlie and Jim followed him.

They knew the villains would come.

They had noticed that naught but fear was depicted on their faces.

Keeping a sharp watch behind them, they made their way back to the shanty.

But they saw nothing of the four men.

Arietta and the rest were waiting for them anxiously.

"Did you find the rest of the gang?" the girl asked.

"Yes," replied Wild. "They will be here presently to get the bodies of the scoundrels that went under a little while ago."

All waited for them to appear.

It must have been fifteen minutes after our three friends got back when they heard the sounds made by approaching footsteps.

Then the forms of four men loomed up.

They came rather slowly, and when close to the shanty halted.

"Come on!" called out Wild. "We don't want you to be all night about this thing!"

Then they came forward again.

"Go right around and get them away, and don't linger long about it, or some one will have to come and take you away!" said our hero.

Then the four carried away the bodies, one at a time.

When the rather gruesome task had been completed Wild went inside.

"We have only lost an hour," he said. "Jim, you stand watch and the rest of us will go to sleep again. Call me at about half-past three."

"All right," replied Dart; "but I hardly think they will bother us any more to-night. They have received a pretty good lesson, I think."

Nothing further was heard of Baldy and his gang that night.

Before six in the morning all our friends were up and stirring, and to see them no one would have thought that anything out of the ordinary had happened during the night.

As soon as he had his breakfast Young Wild West turned to Charlie and Jim and said:

"Now, boys, before we do anything else we will go down to the saloon Brown and I were at last night and find out what is going on. Unless they have not told how it was that three men died so suddenly last night there will be a pretty strong feeling against us, I suppose."

"Well, I think there are more good men here than bad ones, for all that," Jim replied.

They left the shanty right away and walked down to the center of the camp.

The majority of the miners had not yet gone to their work, since it was rather early, and there was a pretty good-sized crowd gathered near the store and saloons, which was quite close together.

Gooseberry Ike was there and he quickly came to meet our friends when he saw them coming.

"There's goin' ter be trouble in ther gorge!" he exclaimed.

CHAPTER VIII.

BALDY JONES SETS A TRAP.

Baldy Jones and his three associates in the plot to burn the shanty felt pretty sore, as might be supposed.

It was a big blow to them to have three of their men killed all at once.

But the reader knows that the villains richly deserved the fate.

There was no such a thing as a lock-up in Gold Gorge, and to have made the men prisoners would have been naught but folly.

The survivors of the party that had formed for the purpose of downing Young Wild West were now more bitter than ever against him.

But they feared him almost as much as they hated him.

That meant that what they did to get square, as they called it, must be done in an underhand way.

It was over an hour after they were summoned to get the bodies of the three men away from the spot where they had dropped before they had done so.

While they removed them from the grounds belonging to Young Wild West immediately, they did not get them down into the part of the camp where the man who acted as undertaker lived until later.

The so-called undertaker was a rather unprincipled fellow, and when they told him that Young Wild West and his partners had shot the men and tried to rob them he simply grinned.

"I can't believe that story, boys," he said. "Why don't yer say that they was tryin' ter rob Young Wild West when they got their medicine? That would sound a whole lot better. But never mind how they died. Ther question now is: have they got enough money on 'em ter pay me fur dom' ther job of puttin' 'em under?"

Baldy shrugged his shoulders.

The fact was that he and Johnson had gone through the pockets of the dead man and taken the biggest part of what they had, which they divided with the other two scoundrels and themselves.

"I don't know what they've got on 'em," he answered. "You'll have ter run your chances, ther same as yer do with any one else that ain't got no one ter stand fur ther expense of buryin' them."

"I should reckon that you fellers oughter stand ther expense all right. They was friends of yourn, wasn't they?" asked the undertaker.

"Well, we ain't got no more money than what we need."

"All right, then. But they won't git buried very deep if there ain't money on 'em. It's worth a whole lot ter be got out of bed at this time of night, especially as I was up all last night, playin' poker, an' I've worked hard ter-day. As it is, I ain't goin' ter do any more ter 'em than cover 'em with a blanket till daylight comes."

But the men were satisfied to this arrangement, so they left and went back to the shanty of Baldy.

They went to sleep and did not get up until rather late the next morning.

By late we mean seven o'clock, for the men at the mines are early risers, as a rule, and the villains generally were no exceptions.

The first thing they did on rising was to spread the report that Young Wild West and his partners had shot three men the night before for the purpose of robbing them, and that they had been caught in the act and prevented by the four.

Few, if any, of the miners believed this, but there were those among them who took sides with the villains, because they were villains themselves, and that made it look bad for our friends.

"Boys," said Baldy, as they were eating their breakfast, "I reckon we've got ther ball started on ther roll. If we can't down Young Wild West one way we kin another. There's enough men here in ther Gorge who will stick ter us, an' I know it, an' that means that there'll be a hot time afore many hours. But in case that ther boy an' his party gets out of ther scrape alive, an' don't leave mighty sudden, I've got a scheme that'll fix 'em, I think."

"What is ther scheme?" asked Dick Johnson, showing great interest.

"We'll rig a trap fur 'em."

"A trap?"

"Yes, a trap."

"What kind of a trap?" asked Hocus.

"One that'll catch 'em nappin', an' kill 'em at ther same time. "I seen a trap like ther one I'm thinkin' of makin' in Californy in ther old days. They called it ther 'Drop of Death,' an' it sartinly was, too."

"'Drop of Death,' hey? Well, that sounds mighty good, anyhow," declared Johnson. "What kind of an arrangement is it, Baldy?"

"Oh! it ain't sich a wonderful invention, but it's bound ter work, providin' yer kin git them yer want down close ter it. You fellers jest take a walk with me right now, an' I'll show yer a place where we kin rig a 'Drop of Death.' Now will be a good time, fur I noticed jest now that Young Wild West an' his pards is over there with ther crowd. If they git out of that crowd all right we'll have ter fix some of 'em with ther 'Drop of Death,' that's all."

As they had finished their breakfast by this time, the rest were eager to go and see what sort of a contrivance Baldy meant to make.

He led them to a high cliff that was right above the shanty occupied by our friends, though they could not be seen by those in it just then, since the overhanging ledge shut off the view from below.

"That would be a putty good drop fur any one ter have, wouldn't it?" Baldy asked, as he pointed below. "There's putty sharp-p'inted rocks down there, ain't there?"

"I should reckon so," answered Johnson.

"I wouldn't want ter tumble down there," Hocus added, shrugging his shoulders.

"I reckon if a galoot dropped down there he'd die, wouldn't he?"

"He sartinly would," exclaimed Johnson.

"Well, that would be ther 'Drop of Death,' wouldn't it?"

"I reckon it would."

"Well, this here 'Drop of Death' what they had in Californy was got up fur horse thieves an' sich. They had jest sich a cliff as this, only it was higher up than this is, an' ther miners goes ter work an' rigs up a big stone so it would turn over if any one stepped on it, an' then down they'd go. It was sure death, too, fur ther rocks at ther bottom was further down than them below us, an' ther distance was much farther. It ain't more'n twenty feet from here down there, but I wouldn't give much fur ther galoot what took ther drop."

"But ther thing is ter git Young Wild West up here an' make him take the drop," said Hocus.

Baldy scratched his head.

"I s'pose that will be a hard thing ter do," he admitted. "But if we could get hold of one of ther gals it would be easy enough."

"How would it?"

Hocus wanted to know the ins and outs of it.

"Well, we could tie her ter a tree or somethin', an' then let her yell fur help. When Young Wild West come up ter git her we could have it rigged so he'd have ter run along the ledge up here, an' if he done that he'd take ther 'Drop of Death' in a hurry."

"I reckon he would."

"See how ther ledge runs along here?"

"Yes," they all said.

"Well, suppose we tied one of ther gals ter that pine over there? She could be seen from below, couldn't she?"

"She sartinly could," admitted Johnson.

"Well, how would any one git up here; I mean how would they be apt ter come ter git here in a hurry?"

"They'd have ter come up there," answered Hocus, pointing to where there was a slant.

"Exactly. Then they'd have ter run right along this ledge ter git ter ther tree, wouldn't they?"

"They couldn't git there no other way."

"Well, right here we'll rig ther 'Drop of Death.' See?"

The schemer pointed out the exact spot.

They all allowed that they saw.

"Well," continued Baldy, who thought he had figured a sure way to put Young Wild West or some of his party out of the way, "jest one of yer go an' git a pick an' a shovel, an' we'll rig this thing right away. While you're gone ther

rest of us will find a stone that will turn over an' do ther trick."

He looked at the man who was the only one left of his old associates as he spoke, and with a nod the fellow started for the pick and shovel.

Then the three searched around and found a stone weighing about a hundred pounds that was round on one side and pretty flat on the other.

By carrying and rolling it together they got it on the ledge at a point that was not more than four feet wide.

Then they sat down and waited until their partner came back.

In a few minutes he returned, and then, under the direction of Baldy a shallow hole was dug.

This done, the big stone was dropped into it, flat side up.

Baldy then propped it so it was almost level with the surface of the ledge with a smaller stone.

Then, with a look of triumph on his ugly face, he placed his foot on the big stone and pressed down upon it.

Half over the stone went right toward the edge of the ledge.

If a person had accidentally stepped upon the stone he would surely have been thrown over the cliff, as there was nothing to catch hold of.

"I reckon that's ther 'Drop of Death' all right," said the villain, as he righted the stone again.

"It sartinly is, but ther next thing is ter git ther bait that Young Wild West will bite on," answered Hocus.

"Well, if we can't do no better, we'll fire at Young Wild West, an' then git him ter chase us up here. We know jest what ther stone is here fur, an' he don't. We kin jump over it, but he won't think of doin' that. He'll take ther 'Drop of Death.' Don't worry about gittin' ther bait fur ther trap. We'll manage it all right. Jest wait!"

Hocus acted as though he had the idea that the 'Drop of Death' was not going to amount to much.

It would work all right, he knew, but how to make it work on the right ones he did not know.

But he did not say anything to throw cold water on the scheme.

The four now walked around to the path leading over to the mining camp and made their way to where a crowd was gathered in front of the saloon they had left in such a hurry the night before.

"Somethin' is goin' on, I reckon," remarked Johnson. "There goes a galoot with a rope."

Something was going on, sure enough.

When Gooseberry Ike told Wild that there was going to be trouble in the Gorge he did not stretch it in the least.

The report that Baldy had circulated about the three men being murdered by our hero and his partners had stirred the bad element of the camp up to a pitch of anger.

The keeper of the saloon had been helping along to get them to attack Young Wild West and his friends, and as he had given out large quantities of whisky some of them were ready for anything.

But nothing daunted, Wild and his partners stepped up in front of the saloon with Gooseberry Ike and looked calmly at the sullen faces in the crowd.

But nothing was done in the way of even insulting the three right then.

The miners did not go to their work, however, and that told plainly that something was going to happen.

"I reckon you'd better go over ter yer shanty till ther galoots find out that they've made a mistake about this thing," advised Gooseberry Ike.

"No," Wild answered. "If ye did that those who don't think us guilty now would surely then. No; we've got to explain this thing to them."

Then he suddenly took off his hat and stepped out before the men.

In a very few words he related just what had happened.

"I'll have the oil-soaked leaves and grass brought over," he said at the conclusion. "Then you will know for fair why it was that the scoundrels were shot. I don't want any one to think that we are anything but straight, honest people. If there is any one here who has an idea that we ain't I would like to hear him say so right now."

"I don't think you are," spoke up a half-drunken miner right away. "That story of yours don't goj with us. It's altogether too thin! We ain't got no men here what would set fire ter a shanty when there was people asleep in it; yer cuoldn't make me believe anything like that."

"Well, please don't say that I lie, though," Wild answered quickly. "I can prove that what I say is true, and I won't stand being called a liar when I don't lie!"

It was evidently the man's intention to start the thing going, for, without the least hesitation, he exclaimed:

"Young Wild West, you're a liar!"

Spat!

Wild was expecting it, and he was ready to act.

He struck the man between the eyes with his clenched fist and sent him staggering in the crowd.

"That is the way I treat sneaking scoundrels!" he said, coolly. "Now if there is any one else here that thinks I shot the three miserable scoundrels for the purpose of robbing them I dare him to speak out!"

"I said so, an' I say so ag'in!" cried the miner he had struck; as he recovered himself and drew his revolver.

Crack!

Young Wild West fired as coolly as though it was nothing at all.

The bullet hit some part of the shooter the miner had in his hand and caused him to drop it.

"You fellows are a set of cowardly hounds!" cried the boy in a ringing voice; "and I am going to shoot the first man who tries to pull a shooter dead in his tracks!"

CHAPTER IX.

THE FOUR VILLAINS ARE DRIVEN FROM THE CAMP.

The daring declaration made by Young Wild West had a wonderful effect on the men who had been eager to take his life.

There was something in the tone of his voice that was convincing, as well as threatening.

There is not the least doubt but that both he and his partners could have been riddled with bullets by the men in that crowd, if they had opened fire on them.

But it was not bullets that was going to win the fight.

It was the remarkable coolness of the boy.

Each man there was afraid of him, and at the same time pretty certain that he had told the truth when he said he and his partners had shot the men because they were in the act of firing the shanty back in the gorge.

"Boys, Young Wild West is all grit ter ther backbone!" cried out Gooseberry Ike. "If yer was all as truthful as he is you'd be pretty close up among ther singers. Jest make up your minds, now, that yer ain't goin' ter act like a lot of crooks. Jest say ter yourselves, 'I reckon that boy is as white as they make 'em, an' I wish I was half ther man what he is!'"

There were, of course, some men in the crowd who were honest and fair, but they were in the minority just then, and that was why they had not said anything.

But when Gooseberry Ike said what he did they broke into a cheer, and like whipped curs the rest slunk back.

They acted as though they were ashamed of themselves, too, and the dashing young deadshot and his partners stood there in front of the saloon, each with a revolver in his hand, masters of the situation.

Wild knew he had them just where he wanted them, but he wanted to impress it on them that he was not the least bit afraid of them, and in order to do this he must show them something they had never seen.

"Gentlemen," said he, coolly, "I want one of you to go to our shanty and fetch the dried grass and leaves which were soaked with oil here. I want you to see just what the three fellows who got their medicine were up to. Just bring the oil can, too. You might know who it belongs to, for I don't believe there are very many cans like it in Gold Gorge."

"I'll go an' git ther things," spoke up one of the men.

The rest appeared satisfied that he should go, so he at once started off.

When he had gone Young Wild West cast a sweeping glance around until his gaze rested upon the man he had hit for calling him a liar.

"You step out here," he said, calmly. "I want to show you and your friends something that you never saw before." All looked at him expectantly.

"What are yer goin' ter show us?" queried the miner, as he stepped out.

It was evident that he felt like killing the boy for what he

had done to him, but he was under cow just then, and very humble in his ways.

"Just unbutton your shirt collar."

"What fur?"

"Do as I tell you. Unbutton your shirt all the way down the front. I see you have some big white buttons on it, and I don't think they look well on a red shirt. I am going to cut them off for you."

The man turned pale, and the rest got out of range, for they knew what was coming.

"I am not going to harm you the least bit," Wild said, with a smile. "I don't bear you any grudge, and, besides, I never yet hurt a man unless he was trying hard to hurt me or my friends. Just unbutton your shirt and stand around side to me."

The boy held a revolver in his hand, and as he thought it might begin to spit fire and lead, anyhow, if he did not obey, the miner quickly unbuttoned his shirt front.

There were four big white buttons on it, and as he threw the shirt open they were right on the side upon which our hero was standing.

Crack!

Wild fired before any one expected it and the top button disappeared.

The miner dodged.

"Stand perfectly still!" came the command.

Crack!

Crack!

Crack!

Three more shots rang out, one after the other, and then the shirt front was devoid of buttons.

"Now you go to the store and get sme darker buttons and sew them on; they will look better," Young Wild West calmly remarked.

The man hurriedly left the spot, heading straight for the supply store, just as though he thought it was important that he should do it right away.

A bigger crowd now gathered.

The better element was being attracted to the spot.

Soon there were more honest men there than there were crooks.

Then the man who had gone after the combustibles that had been intended to start the shanty into a blaze came back with his arms full of the things.

With him came Hop, the Chinaman.

He carried the oil can, which was capable of holding about two gallons.

"Why, that's Baldy Jones's can," cried one of the gang, as he saw the Chinaman set it on the ground before Wild and his partners. "There's his initials right on it, B. J."

This was indeed a fact.

"It's Baldy's, all right," another admitted. "I reckon he was in that game last night himself."

It was one of the friends of Baldy who said this, too.

He had partly believed him when he had told that Young Wild West had shot the three men for the purpose of robbing them, but now it struck him very forcibly that the dashing young deadshot had told nothing but the truth.

It was just then that the four villains who had arranged what they called the "Drop of Death" came upon the scene.

They thought surely that the crowd was getting ready to hang Young Wild West when they saw one of the miners coming with a rope.

Wild had not noticed this, nor had Charlie or Jim.

But they soon had their attention called to the rope, for the man who came forward with it bawled out at the top of his voice:

"This is fur ther neck of ther galoot what owns ther ile can!"

Baldy and his companions no sooner heard this than they looked at each other and turned pale.

It was a big surprise for them.

Strange as it may seem, those who had been the friends of the man now turned against him.

In less time than it takes to record it two miners had seized Baldy Jones and dragged him out into the center of the street.

"Hold on!" cried Young Wild West in ringing tones; "don't hang the rascal! He was not caught in the act of trying to set fire to the shanty, though there is no doubt but that he helped plan it. Don't hang him; give him half an hour to get out of Gold Gorge."

The majority let out a yell of approval

Those who were inclined to be friendly toward the villain were completely won by the dashing young deadshot now.

He was saving the life of one of his worst enemies, and they knew it.

But for his interference Baldy Jones would surely have been hanged in a jiffy, for the miners were the sort of men who do things quickly when they once start.

Dick Johnson and the other two villains were caught and held by the crowd, too.

Everybody there knew that they were together, so the chances are that they would have been hanged, too, but for Wild's interference.

"Give them all half an hour to get out of the camp," said Wild in a voice that was loud enough for all to hear. "Gold Gorge will be all the better for it."

That settled it.

Gooseberry Ike had always been looked upon as a sort of leader and he now assumed that responsibility.

He got upon a barrel and made a short speech to the crowd, and the result was that he got a ringing cheer.

Then he turned to the four prisoners and said:

"It is ther order of ther court that you four galoots has got jest half an hour ter settle up your business an' git out of Gold Gorge. Do yer hear what I say?"

They nodded to indicate that they did.

"If yer are seen around these diggin's ag'in after ther half hour is up you'll git filled with lead. Understand?"

Again they nodded.

That the villains were terrorized was evident.

Their very looks told that.

Baldy Jones cast an appealing glance at some of those he had been sure he could depend upon to help him, but Young Wild West had won them over by his coolness and square dealing, and there was no encouraging glance from them.

It now being settled, the four were released, and straight for the shanty of Baldy they went.

It so happened that Baldy was the only one of them who owned a claim, and that was practically worthless, since not enough dust had been taken from it to pay for the working.

Two or three miners followed him, and one of them made an offer for the claim, which was really more than it was worth.

He immediately accepted, and in a very few minutes the deal had been made.

The villains only had three horses between them, but they managed to buy one, and then they promptly started from the camp, taking with them their blankets and cooking utensils.

As they were riding around the bend that would hide the camp from them, Baldy Jones looked back and said:

"This are what I calls putty tough, boys. Jest when we thought we was at ther top of ther heap we comes down with a big drop!"

"But it wasn't ther 'Drop of Death,' though," answered Dick Johnson, shrugging his shoulders and trying hard to grin.

"But we ain't goin' very far, I reckon!" exclaimed Baldy, his evil gray eyes flashing. "We're outlaws now, an' we'll find a good hidin' place an' hang around close ter these diggin's. If we can't make money by doin' it I'll miss my guess. An' then there's Young Wild West an' his pard! They've got ter go under! Ther 'Drop of Death' has got ter fix 'em, too! I'm bound that it shall be that way, more'n ever now!"

The rest nodded and put on a hopeful air.

The villains had purchased a few provisions and plenty of ammunition.

All had six-shooters and Baldy and Johnson each had a rifle.

As soon as they were well out of sight of the little mining town Baldy suggested that they made a turn and work their way around toward the cliff where they had arranged the big stone so it would turn over and hurl whoever might step upon it over the precipice.

"We want ter git as close as we kin ter Young Wild West, but we don't want ter let him know we're there," he said.

Luck was with the villains, it seemed, for they succeeded in finding a cave a hundred yards from the cliff, and as it was all rock in that vicinity, they could not very well be trailed there.

"This is a fine place," observed Johnson. "We'll try an' stay here until we've got our revenge, an' then we kin light out for some other place."

"That's what's ther matter!" exclaimed Hocus, who was now feeling pretty safe again.

When they had fixed the cave up somewhat and arranged a part of it to keep their horses in Baldy looked at his big silver watch and remarked:

"Ther stagecoach will be along in about ten minutes. What do yer say if you an' me goes out an' holds it up, Johnson? It will be blamed ter us, of course, but ther galoots at ther camp will think we've gone right on. They won't never think of lookin' fur us so close as this ter Young Wild West's shanty."

"I'm willin', if yer thinks there'll be anything ter be got by it," was the reply.

"Of course there'll be somethin' ter be got by it. If we find there's too many men among ther passengers we won't bother with it; but if there ain't more'n one or two it will be easy enough ter clean 'em out."

"Well, I'm with yer, then. How are yer goin', on foot or horseback?"

"Horseback, of course. Two of us is enough. We kin tie our handkerchiefs over our faces, so ther driver won't know us."

They got ready at once.

The villains must have felt that they might as well be hanged for a sheep as a lamb, as the saying goes, for they were certainly taking a great risk.

But things were running their way, just the same, for when the stagecoach came along there were but three passengers in it, and they were a man and his wife and daughter, who had decided to come to Gold Gorge and locate there.

When the two masked villains rode out before the mules that were hitched to the stagecoach and commanded the driver to halt he did so very quickly.

He found that he was covered by a rifle, and he did not want to lose his life.

"All hands step out on ther ground!" exclaimed Baldy, riding up to the vehicle, while Johnson kept the driver covered.

CHAPTER X.

WHAT THE FOUR VILLAINS DID.

The driver of the stagecoach never had a thought of such a thing as a hold-up occurring within a mile of his destination.

And John Healey and his wife and daughter, who were the occupants of the vehicle, certainly did not dream of such a thing.

Consequently, they fell easy victims to the villains.

"Jest hand over all ther money you've got, an' be quick about it!" commanded Baldy Jones.

The three had stepped out in obedience to the command to do so, and when she saw her father go down in his pockets and bring out all the money he had the daughter gave a scream and fainted.

She dropped right at the feet of the outlaw, and when he looked at her he gave a nod.

It struck him right then and there that she was a very pretty girl.

The woman then became hysterical, and she, too, fainted from fright.

It was not much that John Healey had, but it was satisfactory to the robbers, and when he had it in his possession Baldy Jones ordered him to lift his wife into the stagecoach, which he did with great quickness.

The man was coming back to get his daughter, but, leveling his pistol at his head, Baldy commanded him to get into the vehicle.

"We'll take care of her!" he exclaimed, with a laugh.

Death stared him in the face, and Healey knew it.

But he was not going to leave his daughter in the power of such ruffians if he could help it.

Fortunately for her, the girl came to just then, and, realizing her position, she got up and staggered to the vehicle, where her mother was.

She got inside before Baldy could do anything to prevent her.

Then her father sprang to the stagecoach and was half way inside it when the scoundrel fired at him.

The bullet hit him on the arm near the shoulder, and with a cry of pain Healey tumbled into the coach.

"Light out, driver!" cried Johnson, who thought it was all done.

The driver did not need to be told twice.

He cracked his whip and the mules started away at a jump.

Baldy had been foiled, but he did not try to do anything further.

"I was goin' ter take that gal ter ther cave with us," he said to Johnson. "Then, when we git ther three what's with Young Wild West, we'd each have a wife.

"That's too bad," answered his companion. "We could have got her easy enough, I reckon. But it's too late now."

"Yes, it's too late now, so let's git back ter ther cave in a hurry. In less than half an hour there'll be a crowd out this way lookin' fur us."

They turned their horses and rode into the bushes at the side of the trail and then headed for the cave at the top of the precipice that overhung the shanty in the gorge.

When they got there they received a warm welcome from their waiting companions, for the two men had been fearing that something would happen to them.

"It's all right," said Baldy. "I reckon we made about four hundred dollars from ther hold-up, anyhow."

They could not see the little mining town from where they were, so after a few minutes had elapsed Baldy proposed that Hocus should climb a tree and see what was taking place down there.

Hocus did so.

He was just in time to see the stagecoach standing in front of the supply store and a crowd gathering around it.

The arrival of the outfit had been expected, of course, but no one had the least idea that there had been a hold-up.

Young Wild West and his partners were still there, as Hocus could see.

He soon descended the tree, looking a bit uneasy, for he could tell by the actions of the miners that it would go hard with the perpetrators of the deed if they were caught.

"Well, what's goin' on there?" Baldy asked, as he came down.

"There's the dickens ter pay, I reckon," was the reply.

"Is Young Wild West an' his pards there?"

"Yes; they're there."

"Good enough! We've got ther ball rollin' now, so we might as well keep at it. While they is lookin' after ther robbers of ther stagecoach we'll try an' rig a plan ter git hold of one of ther gals that's below us. I'm goin' down there, an' I want yer ter lower me down with a lariat."

"What!" exclaimed his three hearers.

"That's right. There never was a better time ter git ther bait that will bring Young Wild West in ther trap we set. Jest wait till I git ready now. I'm goin' down inter ther gorge from a p'int jest about fifty feet from ther top of ther ledge, where ther trap is set. I can't be seen from ther shanty there, an' I'll see what kin be done in ther way of gittin' hold of one of them gals. I'd jest like ter git ther red-haired one, 'cause she's Young Wild West's sweetheart, I reckon."

Baldy was surely the leader of the four, and the rest gave in to everything he said.

Johnson would not have done such a thing, if it had been left to him, but he felt that he could not afford to go against Baldy just now.

He got a lariat ready and then led the way to the spot he had spoken of.

Placing the noose under his arms, he told his three companions to lower him down.

Since our hero and his partners were not down there, it was not very much of a risk that he was taking.

It is queer how things work sometimes.

Everything was going Baldy's way since he had been driven out of the camp, it seemed.

At the very minute he was being lowered down Arietta was walking up the gorge alone, and with her rifle in her hands.

She had seen a huge bird light on a crag a couple of hundred yards distant, and she had told her companions that she was going to shoot it and fetch it back.

They were watching her from the door of the shanty, but as she turned an angle she was lost to their view.

So intent was the girl in getting to a point where she could get a good shot at the bird that she did not see the villain descending into the gorge at the end of the lariat.

She had got past him, and was just turning another corner, when his feet struck the ground.

Baldy quickly removed the rope from about him and let it hang.

Then he motioned for those above to look in the direction of the girl.

They saw her, for they quickly nodded.

Just then the report of a rifle sounded.

Arietta had taken quick aim at the bird and fired.

As the bird dropped she looked about for a way to reach it, for it tumbled from the crag.

She had not missed.

A cheer went up from those back by the shanty, for they had been able to see the bird all the while.

Arietta found that she could take a cut across the gorge by coming back a short distance, so she turned, and with the still smoking rifle in her hands walked to the point she had turned just before she fired the shot.

She walked squarely into the arms of Baldy Jones.

The brave girl tried to utter a scream, but she was too late, for the scoundrel clapped his hand over her mouth and quickly disarmed her.

Arietta struggled bravely to get away from him, but he was a powerful man and she was but a child in his grasp.

"Jest keep cool, my dear," said Baldy, leering at her and nodding his head. "There ain't no use in your tryin' ter git away, 'cause yer can't. I've got yer hard an' fast, an' I'll kill yer if yer don't keep quiet."

The girl ceased struggling instantly.

He dragged her to the hanging lariat, holding his revolver against her mouth as he did so.

"One little scream an' you'll be a dead gal," he said, and Arietta thought he surely meant it, for never had she seen a more evil or repulsive face than his.

With his left hand he wound the end of the rope about her body, pinioning her arms in the process.

This done, he thrust her own handkerchief in her mouth and tied it there with a bit of twine that he had in his pocket.

His companions above were watching his movements anxiously, for they expected every minute to see some one come to the girl's assistance.

It only took a couple of minutes and then Baldy held onto the rope and motioned for them to haul him and his captive up.

This the three did, working away like beavers.

Just as Baldy and Arietta were landed they saw a young man come around the bend as though looking for the girl.

It was Leon Brown.

Evidently he had come to help Arietta find the bird she had shot.

"I'd like ter send a bullet through that galoot!" exclaimed Baldy. "If Young Wild West was only at the shanty I'd do it, but he ain't, so there's no use."

"What difference would that make?" asked Johnson, who seemed to bear the tenderfoot a grudge, just because he had been cheated of robbing him.

"Well, I don't know as it would make a great deal of difference, so you kin try a shot at him if yer want ter."

"That is jest what I'm going ter do."

Johnson picked up his rifle and took aim at the unsuspecting young man, who was looking all around for Arietta. Crack!

He fired and the bullet must have cut a lock of hair from Brown's head, for he clapped his hand to it and then turned and ran out of sight around the bend.

"You're a mighty poor shot, Johnson," laughed Baldy. "But I reckon your shot will do some good, fur if that galoot had sense enough ter know ther direction it come from he'll tell Young Wild West, an' he'll come up here. Ther only way he kin git here is along ther ledge, an' if he don't step on ther stone an' take ther drop of death I'll be a much s'prised man."

Arietta heard this and wondered what it meant.

She was not so badly frightened at what had happened as most girls would have been.

She was used to such adventures.

She recognized Johnson and Hocus as two of the three men who had visited their camp on the way to Gold Gorge.

She had never seen Baldy or the other fellow before, but guessed that they were the other two of the four she had heard Wild speak of.

"Fetch her ter ther cave," said Baldy, abruptly, as he began to coil the lariat. "She's ter be ther bait fur ther trap an' then comes ther 'Drop of Death!'"

Johnson and Hocus took hold of her and then they all went to the cave.

"I reckon it won't be long before Young Wild West comes back, an' then he'll sartainly come up here," said Johnson.

Baldy now proceeded to take the lariat from the captive girl.

He first produced a short piece of rope which he meant to tie her with.

Arietta made up her mind to escape if it were possible.

"Take ther gag from her mouth, an' if she hollers shoot her," said Baldy.

Hocus quickly removed the gag.

Arietta did not say a word, much less scream.

The next minute the lariat was free from her and Baldy was ready to tie her hands with the short rope.

But just then Arietta struck the villain in the face with her clenched fist and sent him staggering.

She was off as quick as a flash and straight for the ledge she ran.

But the brave girl did not know that there was a trap there.

When she was but a dozen feet from the mouth of the cave she called out loudly:

"Wild! Wild! Save me!"

Much to her joy, she heard an answer from below.

"Stop, gal!" shouted Johnson. "You're goin' ter your death!"

But Arietta heeded him not.

She reached the ledge and then saw Wild, Charlie and Jim rushing to come up the ascent.

The next instant her foot was upon the stone that would cause the "Drop of Death" and it turned under foot.

CHAPTER XI.

ARIETTA ESCAPES THE DROP OF DEATH.

As the stone turned under Arietta's foot she uttered a scream and then, losing her balance, went whirling down into the gorge.

But Young Wild West and his partners were there to catch her, for they had heard the scream.

Luckily for her, they were directly beneath her, and with outstretched hands they waited the brief second to save her from the sharp rocks at their feet.

It is doubtful if any others than the three could have done it, but they were trained to everything that pertained to outdoor life, and the brave girl barely touched the ground as she came down until they deposited her gently upon it.

Arietta had fainted.

Young Wild West was very pale as he bore the girl to the door of the shanty, where Anna and the two Chinamen stood.

Eloise and Brown had rushed inside when they saw the girl slip upon the ledge.

They could not bear the sight.

A cry of joy came from Anna, for she knew that Arietta had been saved.

Then Eloise screamed with delight and rushed out to meet them.

The two knew just what to do, and in a very few minutes Arietta opened her eyes.

"Wild!" she gasped.

"Yes, little one," he answered, "it is all right; you are not hurt."

He kissed her forehead and that seemed to revive her more than anything.

"The scoundrels are up there in a cave," she exclaimed, pointing toward the cliff. "Look out for the stone on the ledge. It is a trap. It was that which made me fall over."

"They are in a cave, you say, Et?" Wild asked.

"Yes, and I heard them say they had prepared a trap to give you the drop of death."

"Ah! How did they get you? Brown told us as we came back that you went out to shoot a bird that was on a crag over there, and that when he ran around through the gorge to help you find it you had disappeared. The next thing he knew the report of a rifle sounded from above and a bullet clipped a lock of hair from his head."

"That is right. I am glad they did not kill him. It was the villain called Johnson who fired the shot at him."

She was able to sit up now, and she quickly told how it was that she had been captured by the villains.

"Well, I guess we will soon put the finish to the four scoundrels," one hero remarked. "We will find another way

to get up there, and then we won't run any risk of the 'Drop of Death.' That is what I call a remarkably fine sort of a trap."

Turning to Jim, he told him to hurry and get some of the miners to go around and head the villains off, in case they were trying to get away.

"Me go, too, allee samee," spoke up Hop, as Dart started.

Baxter, the keeper of the worst saloon in Gold Gorge, was doing a rushing business.

When Jim and Hop appeared they were greeted with a cheer.

Gooseberry Ike ran out and seized them by the arms and fairly dragged them into the saloon.

"Hold on," said Dart; "I want to say something before you go any further."

"Say it," shouted the miner.

"Young Wild West wants some of you to go down the trail right away and head the fellows we run out of town off if they happen to come that way. They were in a cave above the gorge, near our shanty, a few minutes ago. They caught one of the young ladies we have with us, but she got away from them. The man named Johnson fired a shot at the tenderfoot, too, and just missed him by a hair's breadth."

The miners in the crowd ceased talking at once.

Then Jim told them in a few words just what had happened, and what was required of them.

"Good enough!" cried Gooseberry Ike, who had just been elected Mayor of the camp by a unanimous vote. "I reckon we'll be right on hand. Ten men has gone down ther trail already ter find ther galoots what held up ther stagecoach, an' it may be that they'll run across 'em."

Five men were soon mounted and on the way in the direction Jim told them to go.

Then he hastened back to the shanty.

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

Young Wild West and Cheyenne Charlie started to get to the cave where Arietta had left the four scoundrels right after Jim went to get some of the miners to ride out and head them off, in case they tried to get away.

The two started up the ascent.

When they got to the ledge they could see nothing that looked out of the way.

There was a flat stone there, to be sure, and it was right close to the edge, but there was nothing suspicious about it.

"That's right where it was," Charlie whispered.

Then Wild stepped close to it, and noticed that the ground had been dug around it lately.

"I guess that's the stone that turned over with Et," he said. "But how is it that it is back in place again?"

Right here we may as well state that Baldy Jones had placed it back, thinking sure that Young Wild West would rush up and take the Drop of Death.

Strange to say, neither of them thought about fleeing from the spot.

But when they had waited five minutes, and no one came up to the ledge, they began to grow slightly nervous.

"It's funny they don't come up here," Hocus remarked.

"Maybe they don't think there's any one here," suggested the other man.

Just then they heard the sounds of footsteps.

"They're comin' now!" exclaimed Hocus.

The villain tried to take a peep, but he could not see the ledge from the cave.

Wild and Charlie had made a noise on purpose for the villains to hear them if they were anywhere about.

They were trying to get them to show themselves.

If they did it would soon be up with them.

But they failed to do it.

Charlie was anxious to see how the stone would act if any weight was placed on it, so he found a stone that weighed perhaps thirty pounds, and carried it along the narrow, dangerous place to it.

"I'm goin' ter chuck this on it an' see what happens," he whispered to Wild.

"Go ahead," was the reply.

Thud!

As the stone dropped the bigger one turned half over, and down went the smaller one to the bottom of the gorge below.

"That is what I call pretty good," said Wild, as he leaped lightly over the trap. "Come on, Charlie! This shows that the scoundrels took the risk of coming here and setting the trap again after Arietta went over the cliff. They may be in the cave yet."

He followed Wild a few feet, and then stopped.

"I reckon I'll set ther trap ag'in," he said. "It might be a good idea, 'cause one of ther galoots might take ther Drop of Death himself."

Then they moved cautiously forward and soon came in sight of the cave.

Wild knew by Arietta's description that it must be the place.

Just then he knew it was, for he saw a man dodge back into it.

"Look out, Charlie!" he whispered. "Drop!"

Down they both went, and they were not a moment too soon, for two rifles cracked almost together.

Both Wild and Charlie fired at the puffs of smoke, and the result was a shriek of mortal agony.

Then out bounded the form of a man, firing as he came.

It was Hocus.

Cheyenne Charlie fired, and that was the last of him.

Our friends leaped to the left, and got behind a big rock.

Baldy Jones was not going to be caught like a rat in the trap.

He suddenly came out, leading his horse.

Then Wild raised his rifle and fired at the hand of the villain that clutched the bridle rein.

The bullet went through the scoundrel's hand, and with a cry of rage and pain he started on a run, almost straight for the rock behind which our friends were crouching.

Baldy was desperate now.

It was his left hand that had received the bullet, and clutching his revolver with his right, he made for the rock, evidently hoping to get a shot at our hero.

The dashing young deadshot fired at even a shorter range.

The revolver dropped from the villain's hand.

Then he swerved to the left, and made a dash straight for the ledge.

Whether he did it intentionally or not will never be known, but when he came to the balanced stone he leaped upon it with both feet.

Over it went, and down went Baldy Jones over the cliff!

As the shriek of the doomed man rang out Johnson came out of the cave.

He was followed by the other man, and both began firing at the rock behind which our friends were crouching.

Cheyenne Charlie laid his cheek on the stock of his rifle, and Wild did not offer to stop him.

He fired twice and then arose to his feet.

It was all over as far as the four scoundrels were concerned.

Wild led the way to the ledge.

He leaped over the treacherous stone as he had done coming over and Charlie followed his example.

"Now," said Wild, "I guess we had better send that stone over the precipice, too. It won't be the means of killing any more people then."

The scout nodded, and then, under the united efforts of the two it was sent crashing downward.

"Oh, Wild!" cried Arietta, as the two came down. "Is it all over?"

"Yes," was the reply. "If Baldy Jones got killed by his fall it is."

"He never moved after he struck," answered the brave girl. "It was a horrible way for the villain to die, but just think of it! He wanted you to die that way!"

"Well, I didn't do it, Et. It was a great trap that the scoundrels set, but it failed to work. I guess Jones stepped on the stone for the sole purpose of committing suicide, for he had both his hands shot, and he knew he would only be hanged, anyhow."

Jim came back just then, and when he heard that the four villains had been found, and that they were all dead, he was surprised.

A few minutes later Wild and his partners did go over to the camp.

They got there just as Hop was coming out of the saloon.

The Chinaman did not stop to tell how he had got the best of Baxter, but made a bee-line for the shanty.

Wild and his partners soon told what had happened, and the undertaker went to attend to another job.

By noon all those who had gone in search of the four villains were back in the camp.

Then there was a general rejoicing, for those who had leaned on the side of Baldy Jones had made up their minds to do better and work hard for a living, if not a fortune.

John Healey got back the money that Baldy had robbed him of, and was happy.

He staked out a claim the next day, and went to work.

It so happened that Wild selected a claim next to his for Leon Brown.

Both struck good pay-dirt right away.

Brown became acquainted with Healey's daughter, and the couple fell in love.

There was no more gold to be found on the claim Wild had bought of the miner who had made his pile, so our friends decided that Gold Gulch was hardly the place for them, and left it with the intention of paying a visit to each of the mines Young Wild West was interested in throughout the West.

Next week's issue will contain "YOUNG WILD WEST AND THE GULF GANG; OR, ARIETTA'S THREE SHOTS."

SPECIAL NOTICE

Please give your newsdealer a standing order for your weekly copy of "WILD WEST WEEKLY." The War Industries Board has asked all publishers to save waste. Newsdealers must, therefore, be informed if you intend to get a copy of this weekly every week, so they will know how many copies to order from us.

 LOOK! LOOK! LOOK! 

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HELP YOUR COUNTRY!

VIRGINIA WOMEN SAVE TOMATO CROP.

Virginia women went to the aid of the canneries in Page County, October 1, when they volunteered to help save the tomato crop. Leaving their own work, they worked day and night as peelers, thus supplying labor that could not have been obtained in any other way. Among the volunteers were women who own valuable farms and others who made their first experiment in any line of employment outside the home.

COULD NOT HAVE PRODUCED CROPS WITHOUT RESERVE.

A report on the work done during the crop season just ended in New York State by 335 boys of the Reserve indicates that these boys added 1,620 acres to the production of the State. The report does not cover all of the work done in New York by Reserve boys, but it indicates the great value of the services of Reserve boys.

The 335 boys mentioned are credited with producing 264 acres of winter wheat, 66 acres of spring wheat, 15 acres of barley, 463 acres of corn, 727 acres of rye, 26 acres of beans, 26 acres of cabbage, and 33 acres of peas.

NEW YORK COMPILES RECORD OF TWELVE THOUSAND BOYS.

Assistant Federal State Director Frank A. Rexford, of New York, has compiled a complete record covering the activities of 12,000 Working Reserve Boys who have worked on farms in New York State during the past summer. These records are remarkably comprehensive, showing the location of the farm where each boy worked, the number of acres cultivated by each boy, the amount of stock he cared for, the amount earned, and the kind and value of each crop produced.

In addition, the report gives data concerning the health of the boys, living conditions on the farms, and treatment accorded the boys by their employers.

The record is of great value from a statistical as well as from a practical working viewpoint. Mr. Rexford's work in this connection sets an example which it would be well for other officials of the Reserve to consider.

HAWAII SENDS GREETINGS.

While the National Conference was in session at Washington last month National Director William E. Hall received from far Hawaii greetings from Federal Territorial Director Wallace R. Farrington

and the United States Boys' Working Reserve organization in the islands. Mr. Farrington cabled as follows:

"Hawaii sends greetings. Regret my inability to attend National Conference. Hawaii will return approximately 2,500 members of the United States Boys' Working Reserve and an equal number of the Junior Reserve. Late registration and school vacation caused delay in exact record of enrollment. Will have everything in shape for splendid start next year. The outstanding feature here is the proof of the ability of educated white and Hawaiian boys, as well as Orientals, to work in the sugar-cane fields of Hawaii and to render splendid service in industries and to finish the season healthier and happier.

"Our records indicate that the patriotic appeal of the United States Boys' Working Reserve has increased the boy-power service of the islands at least 50 per cent. The boys of Hawaii form a splendid, loyal phalanx ready for any service.

"Hawaii's greatest need is a realization by the leaders of industry that the Government is seriously behind the United States Boys' Working Reserve movement."

TELEGRAPHERS WANTED FOR A. E. F. SERVICE.

The Signal Corps needs 750 bonus telegraphers for service in France. Men skilled in telegraphy, between the ages of eighteen and fifty-five, inclusive, should apply at once for details to the Chief Signal Officer of the Army, Washington, D. C. Requisitions have been received from General Pershing for 750 bonus Morse telegraph operators to be sent to France between now and June 30, 1919. One hundred and fifty qualified men are to be sent abroad immediately and the remainder will go overseas at the rate of about eighty per month. Men between the ages mentioned above, who are qualified, are needed at the front and unusual opportunities are offered them for early service. Bonus telegraph operators who enter the Service will not be kept in training camps for instruction, but only for a sufficient time to outfit them with the necessary clothing and equipment. Qualified bonus telegraphers, who have physical disqualifications for active service, will be accepted for this duty overseas. The Signal Corps state specifically that the physical standard will be lowered in cases of men having the necessary technical qualifications, so that practically any one who is physically able to do his work will be accepted.

STANDING BY HIS CHUM

—OR—

THE SCHOOLBOYS OF RICHLAND HALL

By DICK ELLISON

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER III (Continued).

"Say, Sam, what do you think!" he cried, in some excitement. "Those two Russian officers from the man-of-war are here, and they want to see you."

Sam turned as white as the wall.

"Want to see me!" he gasped. "I can't see them. I won't!"

"That is what Dr. Richland told them," said Dick. "He was quite short with them, but they persisted. He told me to come and tell you. He said that he advised you not to see them, but that he would leave it to your own judgment."

"He is right," said Sam. "I won't see them. Where are they now?"

"In the reception room."

"Go back, like a good fellow, Dick, and tell them I won't see them."

Dick was puzzled, as he had often been before about Sam.

His curiosity was also fully aroused.

For in spite of the fact that he was Sam's roommate and most intimate friend, Dick knew nothing about his chum's history.

Sam had held himself shrouded in mystery. Who his parents were, whether they were dead or alive, where his home was, or, indeed, anything concerning himself the boy had refused to tell, and when Dick had pressed him on these points, Sam assured him that there were reasons for this secrecy.

At first this stood between the two boys, but Dick had long since gotten over any feeling about his lack of confidence, and they were now fast friends.

Dick went back and reported and the two Russian officers went away.

That evening Sam was closeted with Dr. Richland for some time.

It was half-past ten before he came to his room, where Dick was already in bed.

Sam began to undress in silence.

Dick endured this for a minute or two, and then broke loose.

"Come, old man, you needn't be afraid of me!" he exclaimed. "I'm not going to butt in on your private affairs. If you are in trouble and I can help you, why, shout. If it is only a case of being afraid that I am going to question you about your mysteri-

ous past, why, forget it, for I have no idea of doing anything of the sort."

"It is neither one nor the other, Dick," was the reply. "I am troubled, I admit, but there is nothing you can do to help me, and what troubles me most is to feel that I am obliged to put on all this mystery with so good a friend as yourself."

"Cut it out," said Dick. "All I ask is for you to be natural. I suppose Dr. Richland knows your history, and that is all that is necessary."

"He knows all about me, Dick."

"Then it is nobody else's business but yours and his, and it must make no difference between us. You can keep your mouth shut all you like, and have stars embroidered on your fingers and toes, for all I care."

Sam laughed and got into his own bed, which was on the opposite side of the room from Dick's, near the window.

"Some day I'll tell you all," he said, "but just now I can't say a word."

The light was out and the boys lay silent for a few minutes.

"Say, Sam," said Dick, at last.

"Well, what is it?" demanded Sam.

"Just tell me one thing, if you can. 'I've often noticed that when you get excited you speak with a slight foreign accent. Are you a Russian?'"

"I ought not to answer that question, even," said Sam, "but I am going to, for you have a right to ask it. Yes, I am. Good-night."

"Good-night," replied Dick. "Much obliged for the confidence, old man, and I'm not going to ask you another thing, only if you are a Russian your name isn't Sam Sloan."

"And there comes the other thing," laughed Sam. "But I'll answer again, and this must positively be the last. No. My name is not Sam Sloan."

Next day affairs at school ran on much as usual. The Russian man-of-war still remained at anchor off Castle Hill.

Quite early in the morning a boat-load of sailors came ashore, and they wandered about Castleton and the surrounding country.

Several times they came around the schoolhouse,

once when the boys were out at recess and again in the afternoon.

There were two who could speak English, and several of the boys talked with them. When Dr. Richland found out they were there, he sent Prof. Poplam to order them off the premises, and they went.

Dick noticed that as soon as Sam saw them in the afternoon—he did not come out at recess—he went back into the house and remained until the sailors were gone, nor could he be induced to leave the school grounds during the afternoon, although Dick suggested that they ought to call on Nellie Lane and inquire after her health.

It would have been only common courtesy, of course, and more especially so since Jack Lane had been very warm in his thanks to Sam for the service the boy had rendered his sister.

But Sam would not go, and as soon as evening came he went to the workshop and remained there till bedtime.

And he showed his fear by asking Dick to remain with him, which the boy did.

In spite of his promise to restrain his curiosity, Dick could not keep from letting it get the better of him while they were undressing.

"Sam, you are afraid those Russians will kidnap you," he blurted out.

Sam hesitated for a moment.

"Well, I won't deny it, Dick," he then replied. "But it isn't altogether that. Dr. Richland advised me to keep close until the man-of-war sails away."

"Just what I thought. What on earth is she hanging about here for, anyway? Why don't she go on to New York?"

"You ask me too much," said Sam. "I couldn't tell you if I would."

"It's mighty strange," said Dick, pulling off his right shoe. "But I suppose you will explain some of these days."

"If we are still acquainted at the end of three years, Dick, there shall be no mystery between us," was the reply.

The boys got into bed.

Sam usually had a lot to say after the light was out; indeed, that was the time the boys usually exchanged confidences, as schoolboys will.

But on this occasion he was silent, and even Dick did not seem disposed to talk.

It was some time before Dick fell asleep, and when he did his sleep was troubled.

At last he awoke and listened for Sam's breathing, but failed to hear it.

Raising up, he saw that his chum's bed was vacant.

"Great Scott! What's the matter now?" he gasped, and jumped out of bed.

The window was open at the top, as the boys always kept it, and Dick looked down on the lawn, which lay immediately under the window.

Just at this minute the door opened, and in walked Sam in his pajamas.

"Heavens, boy! You gave me such a scare!" cried Dick. "I thought the Russians had got you sure. Where have you been?"

"Only to the bathroom," replied Sam. "My head aches fearfully. I wanted to bathe it. I feel better now, and I think I can get some sleep."

"Haven't you been asleep?"

"No."

"What time is it?"

"A little after midnight. I just heard the hall clock strike twelve. But go on to bed, Dick. I'm all right. You want to forget about the Russians. First thing you know the whole school will be talking about this affair."

The boys returned to bed, and Dick was soon asleep.

This time his sleep was dreamless, and when he did awake his head ached to bursting. The clock was striking four.

He raised up and looked over at Sam's place.

The bed was empty, the window stood wide open at the bottom.

Sam was gone!

CHAPTER IV.

MISSING FROM SCHOOL.

This time Dick Dutton was thoroughly frightened.

A strange odor seemed to pervade the room.

Dick, who had done something at chemistry, thought he could recognize it as the smell of ether.

His own condition alarmed him.

Not only did his head ache, but he felt weak and dizzy.

He now discovered that the pillow was wet.

Over in a corner lay a towel which had not been there the night before.

Dick picked it up and smelled it.

The towel was strong with ether.

"Great heavens, the Russians have got poor Sam as sure as fate!" he gasped.

Dick went to the window and peered out, but there was nothing to be seen.

He ran to the bathroom in the vain hope of finding his chum there.

No Sam in the bathroom.

Dick was now desperate.

He hurried on some of his clothes and ran to the end of the corridor in his bare feet, where he knocked on a door.

Presently a voice called out to know what was wanted.

"It is I, Dick Dutton, Mr. Poplam!" replied Dick. "Sam Sloan is missing. I believe I've been chloroformed or etherized or something. Dr. Richland ought to be told right away."

A grunt was the answer.

(To be continued.)

CURRENT NEWS

PREFERS DEATH TO SERVICE.

Preferring death to serving in the army, and fearing he might be called at any time following registration, J. O. Hill, Jr., of Charleston, W. Va., took his own life. He climbed a tree on the edge of a cliff of rocks, adjusted a noose over his neck and jumped over the edge. Death was instantaneous. He was 36 years old and a Socialist. He was a farmer.

SHE COUNTED EVERY PEANUT.

William Fehrman, store manager, Hammond, Ind., hired an ambitious young woman the other day and put her to work in the basement with instructions to take an inventory and to count and classify every article. Another day lately he asked what had become of the new employe. She was found in a corner of the basement where peanuts were stored. She had finished one barrel and asked if a recount for verification would be necessary.

SAVED BY A BIBLE.

"I saw a Bible that saved a soldier's life," writes John Gould, of East Claridon, O., from Italy. "The soldier had the Bible in his pocket when a bullet struck him. The bullet went through 365 pages. You couldn't buy that Bible from him for any amount of money. I am still with my old company. When we arrived here we were showered with flowers. When we paraded we could hardly get through the streets for the crowds. I think Italy is a finer country than France. I don't know what we would do without the Red Cross and the Y. M. C. A."

POCKET KNIVES, WATCHES, CLOCKS AND CYCLES TO BE REDUCED.

Curtailment in the manufacture of non-essential articles for the remaining months of 1918 was announced recently by the War Industries Board in its program of conservation of materials, labor and transportation. Production of pocket knives is limited to 70 per cent of four months' production in 1917; bicycles and motorcycles to 75 per cent, clocks and watches to 70 per cent, boilers and radiators to 50 per cent and rag felt floor coverings to 50 per cent. Composition roofing and building boards may be manufactured only for government use.

LIGHT WARNS SAILORS.

Nearly 150 lights dot Alaska's long coast line to warn seafarers away from the rocky shores, according to R. R. Tinkham, assistant superintendent of the Alaska lighthouse district. Eleven of the lights are tended by keepers. Mr. Tinkham asserted recently. Besides, there are over 100 automatic lights and numerous buoy lights that do not require the

services of keepers. An ingenious sun valve for automatic lights, in use in other lighthouse districts, Mr. Tinkham said, has proved impracticable in Alaska. This contrivance, through the action of the sun's rays, shuts off the gas which supplies the light and thus lets it burn only at night.

RATS WISER THAN MEN.

Investigators of mining conditions and the peculiar dangers to which miners are subjected recently have taken much interest in the practice of Western gold miners to make pets of the rats which commonly infest mines. On the mother lode vein of California it has been found that the miners invariably feed the rats and take care of them, believing that the rodents are a source of protection against accidents. This is due, the men say, to the instinct of the rats, which warns them when a tunnel is unsafe. And when the rats leave a tunnel it is almost impossible to get the miners to work there. This recalls the belief among sailors that rats will leave a doomed ship. The miners also have found that rats are much more susceptible than humans to the dangerous gases that so often cause loss of life in the mines. Long before the miners themselves are affected by these gases the rats become sick and show symptoms of distress. So the men keep close watch on the rats' good health.

RAISING RABBITS.

Since the price of meat has been soaring, substitutes for beef and pork have been in demand. The most popular method in central Illinois of filling out the menu without patronizing the butcher is to raise rabbits, and hundreds of persons are now so engaged with profit. It is the consensus of opinion among the breeders in this portion of the State that the Flemish giant rabbit is the best, its meat closely resembling the taste of chicken. Many persons who have served Flemish rabbit have been complimented over their "lovely chicken dinner."

The Belgian hare, which has many followers in Illinois, is not so toothsome, by far. The Flemish is bred for meat and weight, while the Belgian is favored for color, symmetry and small sized bones.

The weight of rabbits varies greatly. The giant Flemish leads, specimens being known to reach 22 pounds, although the average ranges from 15 to 19. Belgian hares, when a year old, weigh about 12 pounds. The other species are somewhat lighter.

Rabbit hides bring 35 to 75 cents a pound, although there are instances where the white fur brings much higher prices, according to quality and appearance.

FROM ALL POINTS

FIGHTER FINDS PICTURE.

Private Clayton Carmichael, who is in Minneapolis to aid the Fourth Liberty Loan, found in the first home he visited here a picture of the nurse who attended him in a hospital at the front. The picture was that of Miss Marion Backus, and it was in the home of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. T. C. Backus, 212 West Thirty-sixth street. Miss Backus had nursed him at Beauvais last June, after he had lost a leg. Miss Backus entered hospital service in France May 7. The hospital is directly behind the front lines on the western front, and it was shelled fifteen out of twenty days while Private Carmichael was there, he said. He and two other convalescent soldiers from the Walter Reed Hospital at Washington are here to aid the loan.

ADMIRAL DOT DEAD.

Admiral Dot, the famous midget, died in the White Plains Hospital Saturday night, October 26, of influenza. He was fifty-nine years old. His daughter, Mrs. Allen M. Golden, died in the same hospital Thursday night, October 24, of influenza. Admiral Dot was one of the first to tour the country with P. T. Barnum. He was in the circus business for more than twenty-five years. Twenty-five years ago he opened a hotel in White Plains.

Admiral Dot was born in San Francisco, Cal. His parents were of normal size, as were two children born to the midget and his wife. He was first exhibited by Barnum when he reached the age of seven. He is survived by his wife and a son, Gabriel Kahn, who is serving as a private in the American army in France.

NATIONAL RESTAURANT.

The national restaurant, London, which was established to expose the profiteers, is not only self-supporting, but is making a good profit, according to Alderman C. F. Spencer, its director. Caterers had charged that the enterprise was able to supply good food at reasonable prices only because it had government aid.

After deducting rent, management charges and all other expenses, the restaurant has been clearing about \$350 a week, or 70 per cent. a year on its capital.

Meals sold for 13 cents yield a net profit of about 2 cents. Commenting on this, the Manchester Guardian observes: "It is thus beyond question that even at war prices excellent food in sufficient quantities can be sold at prices within the reach of every one, with a sound profit left over."

The British Food Controller thus is encouraged in his policy of opening national restaurants in other big cities.

ANSWERED RIDDLE TO WED.

"How old is Ann?" By answering this ancient riddle, Frank Wurtz, of San Dimas, Cal., won a bride—Anna Swango, twenty years, nine months and three days old.

They lived on adjoining ranches. Wurtz carried his courtship successfully, until one day Ann asked:

"Frank, how old is Ann?"

"What's that got to do with our getting married?" he asked peevishly.

"Oh, I just have a hunch," replied the maid. "You guess my age down to the day and I'll marry you. Until then I won't see you."

And she kept her promise. To his repeated calls a voice always asked, "How old is Ann?"

He asked her parents in vain.

But there are methods and methods.

Somehow the girl's young brother was tipped off to the location of the family Bible. And there was the answer—Ann's age right down to the day.

The couple came to Los Angeles on their honeymoon.

BARRED WAR WORK FOR CHILDREN UNDER 14.

Children less than 14 years of age were barred by the War Labor Policies Board in a ruling the other day from employment that is performed under Government contract. The action is a primary move to have all children engaged in work returned to school for the winter. Child labor is not considered necessary to war industries at this time or to other lines of work that cannot be dispensed with in the war period.

A comprehensive investigation into employment of children in factories and mills which has been conducted by the children's bureau of the Department of Labor revealed the presence of many boys and girls less than 16 filling positions. The fact that the Government is the largest employer of labor at this time gives wide effect to the ruling eliminating those below 14 years from employment.

Under instructions sent out by the Federal Employment Bureau to the branch offices in different States the presence of children in wage-earning places will be discouraged in every way. Where the children cannot be returned to school, efforts will be made to have them placed in positions where they can become useful and proficient in their work.

Special exceptions will be made by the Federal Employment Service in cases where it is necessary that the earnings of a boy or girl supplement the family income. In many cases where the family income is reduced through the service of a father or brother in the army, efforts will be made to render aid through the Red Cross which will enable the child to stay in school.

ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST

ANNAPOLIS CLASS BIGGEST IN HISTORY.

Without any special change of methods, the disciplinary and instruction staff of the Naval Academy is caring for and training the largest student body in the history of the institution. There has been an expansion all along the line, and a greater effort to meet the increased burden which the war has put upon teachers and students.

The regiment of midshipmen consists of 2,118 members, which is larger by 25 per cent. than it has ever been, and to this may be added the 450 officers of the Naval Reserve, who are undergoing a special course of fifteen weeks, leading to temporary commissions in the regular service.

SAVED HIS GRANDFATHER'S LIFE.

Little Earl Bogart, the four-year-old adopted son of Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Bogart, of Limestoneville, Montour County, Pa., is \$50 richer now than he was last year.

His grandfather, John B. Seese, seventy-nine years old, purchased a Liberty Bond for the youngster and put it in a safety vault for him as an investment for saving his life.

Mr. Seese fainted and fell into a large spring. The child, seeing the grandfather tumble, began to cry, and while he could not speak he pointed to Mrs. Bogart, a daughter, and brought her to the father's rescue, thus saving the old man's life.

As a reward, Mr. Seese purchased a Liberty Bond, which will be given to the child at his maturity. Little Earl is probably the youngest hero in the State.

BALLOONS AND PIGEONS ONCE CARRIED MAIL.

Although airplanes were unknown in 1870, balloons played an important part in the siege of Paris. So closely were the Prussian lines drawn about the city that communication with the outside world was cut off. The military authorities called upon the aeronaut, Durouf, to make a balloon flight from Paris. Carrying 250 pounds of letters, he made the attempt, and after a flight of three hours landed at Evreux, far beyond the zone of Prussian control. A regular mail service was then established and though many flights ended in disaster it continued until the surrender of the city. It was in this way that Gambetta, the statesman, made his escape from Paris to Tours, where he recruited a new army, which offered a desperate but vain resistance to the invaders.

The balloon service was maintained throughout the investment, from September 23, 1870, to January 28, 1871.

Letters to be sent "par ballonnet" were writ-

ten on very thin paper, and among the most interesting relics of the siege are the letter journals, invented by Le Petit Journal. The news of the besieged city was printed in very small type on one side of a thin letter sheet, and the other side of the sheet was left blank for personal communication. About a score of Paris papers issued these novel sheets and practically all letters were written on them.

Getting letters into the beleaguered city presented a more difficult problem, but this was partially solved by sending carrier pigeons out with the balloons. Letters and dispatches were photographed and so reduced that a single pigeon homing its way to Paris often carried thousands of dispatches in a quill attached to its tail. One pigeon carried to Paris dispatches representing 300,000 francs in postage.

NEW THINGS.

Modern methods of mining and smelting have made it profitable to reopen a nickel mine in Norway that was abandoned half a century ago.

Irrigation projects under consideration for India involve about 10,000,000 acres of land.

A combined postcard and letter sheet is a Michigan inventor's idea, the latter folding against the former and being sealed with a gummed flap.

By photography with a vibrating lens an English scientist has timed a lightning flash at one-nineteenth of a second.

In Thibet native gold miners leave nuggets intact or replace them if disturbed in the belief that they are the parents of dust and spangles.

On a dairy farm conducted by a European city cows are milked in the fields by electrical machines that are supplied with current through cables.

A lever arm lifts the top of a new range and holds it out of the way when a fire is to be fixed.

A nut cracker has been invented that will crack three nuts at once.

An aerial rudder helps to steer a French racing automobile and lessens its skidding.

At least 100 different species of oysters are known to scientists.

In a London bird school parrots are taught to talk with phonographs.

A FEW GOOD ITEMS

CHINA'S NEW PRESIDENT.

Hsu Shi Chang was inaugurated President of China on October 10 in the presence of members of the Cabinet and of the Parliament, according to an Associated Press cable. A reception followed, at which members of the Diplomatic Corps tendered their congratulations.

STRONG WOMAN.

A young woman working in overalls at the Northern Pacific freight house, Baeth, Mont., can pick up a 900-pound piano with her truck and run off with it as readily as most of the readers of this paper can pick up and walk off with a ten-pound suit-case. In her working clothes she resembles a sixteen-year-old boy, but dressed as a woman, she is very much a woman, and a young woman of prepossessing appearance too. She weighs only about 130 pounds, is 5 feet 4 inches tall and has feet and hands smaller than those of the average woman.

Yet, her foreman says, she is as efficient a "trucker" as any man.

YOUNG WAR VETERAN.

Wounded and invalided back to America before he was 16 years old, is the record of John Walker Burley, a son of Mr. and Mrs. C. B. Burley of Lynchburg, Va. Enlisting in June, 1917, one month before he was fifteen years old, young Burley went in September of that year to Camp McClellan with Company E, 1st Virginia Infantry. Later he was with the company when it was merged into Company L, 116th Infantry.

Last March he was one of twelve men picked from that company to go to France. Arriving there, he was assigned to the 60th Engineers and later to the 6th Infantry. In July he was wounded and Sept. 10 he arrived at Camp Stuart, Newport News. From there he was transferred to the post hospital at Plattsburg Barracks, N. Y. His mother will go to Plattsburg to see him as soon as she is permitted to do so by the authorities there.

JURY PAYS FINE.

A jury before City Recorder J. J. Dowd of South San Francisco, Cal., recently, after finding J. T. Page guilty of disturbing the peace, paid his fine of \$25. According to Page's story, he was in a saloon owned by Charles Sturman when C. C. Lind, the bartender, he said, insulted the flag. Page sought to make Lind kiss the flag in apology. Lind refused and Page struck him. Sturman caused Page's arrest on a charge of disturbing the peace.

D. E. Conley, foreman of the jury, asked the court if it would be logical for the jury to pay Page's fine.

When the court said it would, the jurors took up a collection. One of the jurors found himself without funds and Sturman loaned him the money.

A BIG FROG FARM.

William Waddington is the possessor of six large tracts of land in the Illinois bottoms on the Mississippi River, a little south of St. Louis, and has dealt extensively in the frog business. Much of those bottom lands are marshy and swampy and unfitted for agricultural purposes.

Many years ago Mr. Waddington conceived the idea of "frog farming," and after cleaning up the swamp lands with the improved scrapers and inclosing several hundred acres with a strong wire fence and otherwise beautifying the grounds surrounding these marshy places, he soon became the possessor of a huge frog farm.

Convinced that he had the grounds and the fresh spring water, he was determined to experiment in the breeding, raising and selling of the delicious amphibious animals. He made a trip to Paris and there investigated the propagating and handling of this palatable luxury. He made arrangements to have shipped to him twenty-five French bulls and seventy-five female frogs, which landed in good order and condition at St. Louis. From there they were conveyed to his froggery in the Illinois bottoms and turned loose to roam over the placid waters that sparkled far and wide.

In less than a year the foreign stock had completely driven the native breed from the swamps and he was shipping the "French" article to St. Louis and Chicago. He had a contract with several packing and slaughtering houses for the offal, which was hauled to the different froggeries. Stale bread and broken crackers were also used in feeding, besides the innumerable insects and water wiggins that abound in such damp and marshy districts. It was a sight to see thousands of these frogs jumping to their accustomed places at feeding time. They were fed twice a day. When the first came into the market they sold as high as \$2 per dozen, but the price fluctuated according to the demand, and sometimes dropped as low as 50 cents, but would average \$1 per dozen through the season.

During the winter months they would disappear by burying themselves in the mud along the outer edge of the lake or swamp. It requires a French frog about three months to mature—that is to say, large enough to market, but they become full grown at the age of six months, while the American frog requires fully eight months, and then is not more than three-quarters the size of the French animal—the latter a most beautiful yellowish-green color, with golden spots all over his body.

WILD WEST WEEKLY.

NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 20, 1918.

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GOOD CURRENT NEWS ARTICLES

A tiny bear cub named Fairbanks has been sent by the people of this district to the Alaskan draftees in training for service at Fort Gibbon, Alaska. The cub was caught in the woods near Fairbanks, Alaska, and the soldiers have agreed to keep the bear, and, if possible, take him overseas with them.

Twelve sons in active service is the record of R. H. Windslow, a negro preacher of Rayville, La. Eight sons enlisted before the enactment of the selective service law and the other four are in the National Army. Two of the soldiers are twins, the last three triplets.

Mrs. G. W. Wright, of near Mount Vernon, Ky., has picked a box of blossoms from an apple tree in her orchard. The tree is in full bloom and the blossoms are as fragrant as they are in the spring. This is not an uncommon occurrence, but is said to be a sure sign that the tree that blooms in the fall will die.

Growers are reporting phenomenally large Bartlett pears at Hood River, Ore. Several orchardists have brought in specimens of this variety, usually averaging about a quarter of a pound, that weighed a pound. One or two monsters have tipped the scales at twenty ounces. All varieties of fruit are running to large sizes this season.

No more music written by living or dead German composers will be performed by members of the Kansas City Musical Club for the duration of the war, it was announced the other day. This ban against another "made-in-Germany" product was decreed by this city's oldest and largest musical organization. The action was a resolution adopted in a general meeting of the club and drew objections from a number of the members who had studied music in Germany, but these were withdrawn as the sentiment favoring it became more pronounced.

The first diamond discovered in Griqualand, South Africa, was found by the children of a Dutch farmer, who for a time used it for a plaything. The stone was sent to Cape Town, where its true nature was recognized, and it was subsequently sent to Paris, where it sold for \$2,500. Researches in the region soon followed, and diamonds were unearthed in various places in Griqualand West, with the result that forty-seven years ago the country of the Griquas, a mixed race sprung from Dutch settlers and native women, was formally annexed by Great Britain. Diamond hunting was at first confined to the banks of the Vall River, but in the year of the British occupation mines were opened in the locality known as "dry digging," which later became known as Kimberley.

GRINS AND CHUCKLES

He—Which do you prefer this weather—lemonade or champagne? She—It all depends. He—On what? She—On who pays for it.

"No, Jack, I'm afraid it's impossible. We should never get on well together. You know I always want my own way so much." "Well, that's all right. You could go on wanting it after we were married."

As the pleasant-faced woman passed the corner Harris touched his hat to her and remarked to his companion: "Ah, my boy; I owe a great deal to that woman." "Your mother?" was the query. "No; my landlady."

"I s'pose John is still takin' life easy," said the woman in the spring wagon. "Yes," answered the woman who was carrying an armful of wood. "John has only two regrets in life. One is that he has to wake up to eat, an' the other is that he has to quit eatin' to sleep."

Repairs were taking place at an English cathedral, and the dean, a very pompous clergyman, came in to see how the workmen were getting on. One of the men, a carpenter, took no notice of him, and the dean, who thought that the man should have lifted his cap respectfully, said: "Do you know, sir, I am dean of this cathedral?" "Are you, really?" said the workman. "Pretty good job, too, I should think. Take care you don't lose it."

The teacher of a certain school received the following note explaining the absence of one of her pupils the day before: 'Plese excooze Henry for absents yesterday. Him an' me got a chance of a ride to a funeral in a carriage, an' I let him stay home as he had never rode in a carriage an' never went to a funeral, nor had many other pleasures. So please excooze.'

A GALLANT RESCUE.

By Col. Ralph Fenton

There seemed to be a more than ordinary bustle and excitement upon one of the wharfs of San Francisco one morning in the year 1850.

Since daybreak the "Blue Peter" had been flying from the mast of the steamer Golden Star, running to Panama, and already the engineers had begun to raise the steam.

This in itself was not so unusual an occurrence as to cause so much interest among the bystanders, but the fact was that, in spite of the precautions used to prevent it, a rumor had got abroad that over half a million dollars' value of gold formed part of her cargo.

The first excitement caused by the discovery of gold in the State had not yet subsided; emigrants were pouring in from all quarters, but few had yet begun to return, and at ten o'clock, which was the hour fixed for the steamer to sail, the total number of passengers amounted to two.

These were an old gentleman named Ashton and his only daughter.

His daughter was a most beautiful girl of not more than eighteen.

Just as the gangways were being hauled in, and the hawsers cast off, a young man broke through the crowd, and making his way to where the captain was standing, asked if he would allow him to work his passage to the Isthmus.

A fresher specimen of a broth of a boy from the old sod is seldom seen.

The captain willingly granted his request at once. He was very short-handed, and as he cast his eyes upon the men comprising his crew a shade of anxiety came upon his face. With the exception of the officers they were all green hands, and a more villainous-looking set it would be hard to find.

The young Irishman, who gave his name as Mike Mahoney, was placed as assistant to the cook, and in an hour or two the captain had probably forgotten his very existence.

For more than four days after passing the Golden Gate no sign of any mutinous feeling could be seen among the crew, and the officers began to hope their fears had been without foundation.

For some time Mike Mahoney had been trying to get a chance to say a word in private to the captain, but this it seemed impossible to do.

At last he plucked up courage, and, advancing to where the captain stood on deck, made a shamefaced bow and pulled the forelock of his hair respectfully.

"Av ye plase, sir," he said, "wud ye be after listin' me spake wid ye for a minute or two?"

"Well, say away," the captain answered. "What is it?"

"If it is something of importance that I wish to tell

you alone." The captain started back in utter surprise at the sudden difference in the tone and voice of the speaker. He could see in an instant from the earnest look upon the young man's face that the request was no idle one.

"Come to my cabin in half an hour," he said.

When at the time appointed Mike presented himself, he found the captain seated at the table with a decanter of wine before him.

He was evidently curious to learn the nature of the young Irishman's communication, but hardly had the door been closed upon his entrance than it was again thrown open, and the first and second mate, accompanied by half a dozen or more of the crew, rushed into the cabin.

Before Mike could utter a word one of the sailors had seized him by the throat, while the two officers caught his arms so that to move was impossible.

The next instant, however, two heavy blows from behind felled the two officers senseless to the floor, and the captain also found his arms pinioned to his side.

"What is the meaning of this?" he gasped.

"It means," one of the men answered, with a hoarse laugh, "that the ship is ours, and you are all our prisoners."

While he was speaking himself and his companions had been busy lashing the captain's hands and feet firmly together as well as those of the young Irishman and the two officers, who were beginning to slowly recover from the effects of the blow dealt them.

There was need for no explanation now that the steamer and the treasure were in the hands of the mutineers.

With one of the mutineers holding a loaded revolver on either side of them, the engineers were forced to keep the engines working, while the vessel's course was changed in the direction of the islands of the Pacific.

The prisoners were at once confined in separate cabins, and those of the mutineers who were not on duty assembled in the main cabin to carouse over the success of their nefarious scheme.

The stateroom allotted to Miss Ashton opened from the main cabin in which the debauch was taking place, and every word they uttered could be distinctly overheard by the young girl.

"The girl is mine," she heard one of the ruffians say. "I am willing to give up my share of the swag, but the girl I will have."

"The deuce you say!" struck in another; "the girl is just as much public property as the rest of the cargo, and we'll have to throw for the chance to court her first."

The proposition seemed to be received more favorably, and she could hear the rattle of the dice, mingling with the clink of the glasses, and the foul oaths that were proceeding from their lips.

As she listened, a determination came over her

to die by her own act, if needs be, before the hand of one of the miscreants should touch her.

The conversation of the wretches in the outer cabin had told her that her father had also been made a prisoner, and that his life, like the rest, had been spared for the present, in view of a storm or other emergency arising, when their help would be required to assist in working the vessel.

From their words she could gather the exact position of the cabins where they were confined, and the thought flashed through her mind that if she were once at liberty she could also set them free.

Looking all around, such an idea seemed worse than hopeless, as the only window in the cabin was hardly wide enough to admit of a cat passing through.

Suddenly the remembrance came to her mind that a large bowie-knife her father had been used to carry in the rough state of life in the mines had been placed in a small satchel which stood in the corner of the cabin.

It was only a lucky chance, but at the time it seemed to her to be little less than a special interposition of Providence in her behalf.

By this time it was beginning to grow dark. This was another fact in her favor, and seizing the large, keen-edged blade, with the energy of desperation she began to hack at the woodwork surrounding the small sash.

Every moment in an agony of terror she expected that the ruffians in the outer cabin would open the door and surprise her in the act.

At last, however, she had enlarged the aperture enough to squeeze her body through, and with an earnest feeling of gratitude she at last stood upon the deck, with the cool night wind fanning her brow.

With an unworded prayer throbbing from her heart, she crept along the shadow to the cabins where the prisoners were confined.

Without being discovered, she reached the door, but then a circumstance not thought of before flashed through her mind, causing a feeling of utter despair.

The doors were locked and she had no key to open them.

She stood for an instant or two overwhelmed by this unexpected frustration of her plan, and then, with a feeling of desperation she turned and entered the captain's cabin, the door of which stood ajar.

Her good angel must have been guiding her actions, for it was empty, while on the table lay a bunch of keys.

Seizing them, she again made her way to the cabin where the prisoners were confined, and in an instant the lock of the first was turned, and the door swung open on its hinges.

It chanced to be that of the young Irishman, and in another second or two the ropes securing him were cut, and he stood at liberty.

A rapid motion of his hand and a pair of false

gums fastened in his mouth were taken out, changing the whole expression of his face in a moment.

Never was metamorphosis more complete. The Hibernian's expression had vanished, and the girl, with a little gasping cry of mingled joy and incredulity, exclaimed:

"Am I dreaming? Charles!"

"Yes, my darling," he answered hurriedly, "your own Charles, who loves you better than his life."

There were, however, but little time for explanations or tender speeches, and without any loss of time the remaining cabins were opened and the inmates set at liberty.

Leaving the heroic girl, whom the reaction of the agitation she had undergone was beginning to overpower, in the captain's cabin, the four released captives and the ex-Irish boy crept away in the darkness toward the engine-room.

Crawling stealthily upon the mutineers on guard, they sprang upon them, and before their amazement would permit them to utter a word their weapons were wrested from them and they were made prisoners.

Then, with the captured revolvers in their hands, they made their way to the doors of the cabin in which the remaining ruffians were still deep in their debauch, and, standing on the threshold with the weapons leveled, barred all means of egress.

The mutineers, taken wholly by surprise, and muddled by the liquor they had been drinking, were unable to offer any resistance, and went down before the deadly aim of the three officers and their two companions like sheep in the shambles.

Out of the fourteen or fifteen in the saloon when the fight commenced, but five remained to be placed in irons when it was ended.

The steamer was again headed on its original course, and the following morning a steamer bound for San Francisco came in sight, from which enough men were procured to work the vessel to its destination, which it reached in less than a week afterward.

As for the so-called Mike Mahoney, his real name was Charles Harper, and he had loved Miss Ashton since she was a child. Her father had not approved of the match, however, and the young man had started for California to try in that land of fortunes to gain one that would enable him to aspire, without the charge of presumption, to the hand of the girl he loved.

Having learned that she and her father were to return home in the Golden Star, and knowing the character of the crew, he had assumed the character of an Irishman, the better to mix with them unsuspected, and frustrate their designs.

All is well that ends well, however, and in New York papers of some months later was seen the notice of a marriage, in which a Miss Ashton and Charles Harper were the parties chiefly interested.



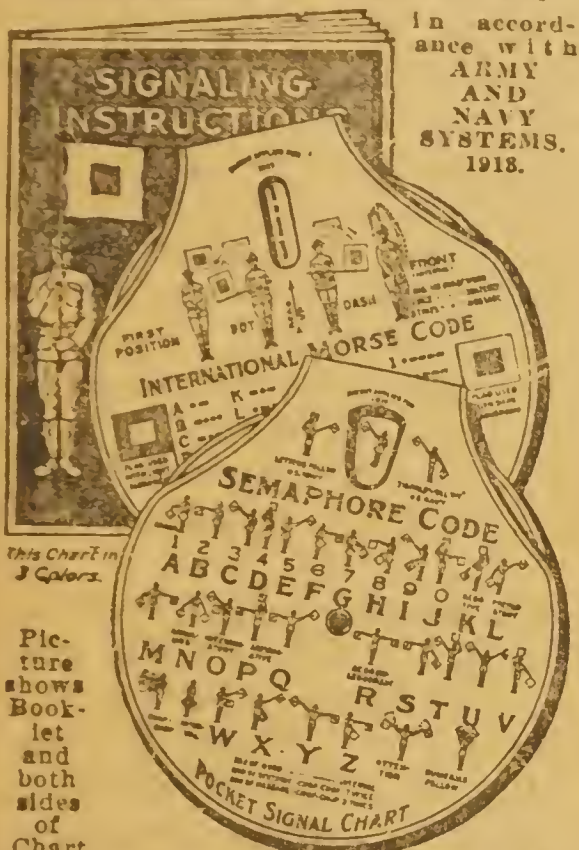
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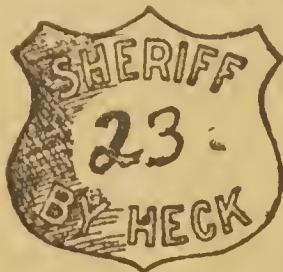


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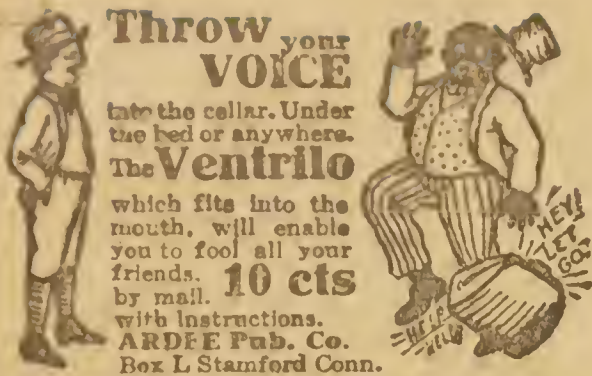
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I am going to give this regular, gasoline propelled, motor driven automobile to some boy or girl just for spending a little spare time among neighbors and friends. Runs 25 miles per hour; holds two people; especially built and designed for boys and girls. It looks like a \$2000.00 racing automobile; has up-to-date wire wheels; non-skid tires; powerful gasoline engine; runs 60 miles on a gallon of gasoline. It will take you quickly and safely everywhere. I also give dozens of other prizes. Hurry—write quick—at once and I will send you my easy plan for earning this \$300.00 automobile and other grand prizes.

Don't send any money but rush your Name and Address quick

CY SEYMOUR AUTO CO.
Dept. 73 Batavia, Illinois

Only \$1.00 Down
Solid Gold



Yes, mail us only \$1, and we will send you prepaid on 10 days' trial, a Lachman mounted in solid gold. When it comes merely deposit \$3.75 with the postman and then wear the ring 10 full days. Free trial! If you or any of your friends can tell it from a diamond send it back and all your money will be returned at once. But if you keep it send us \$2.50 a month until \$18.75 has been paid.

Write Today Send \$1 today and tell us which of the two rings illustrated above (ladies' or men's) you wish. Be sure to send the size of your finger.


Harold Lachman Co., Dept. 2793 12 N. Michigan Av. Chicago

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Writing one photoplay a week right in your own home. We show you how to **TURN YOUR IDEAS INTO DOLLARS**. Demand increasing Greater than Supply. Easy, fascinating, instructive work. **NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY**—Just common sense and **CUR** HELP to make your "happy thoughts" and daily experiences into scenarios. In the lives of all people—in **YOUR** life—are many incidents that will make heart gripping photoplays the producers are looking for. Write **NOW** for our FREE book of valuable information and special prices and **FREE OFFER**.

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PATENTED MAY 22, 1917



If you can comb your hair, you can cut it with our "Wonder" long or short just like any barber. The same way to remove hair from under arms, face, neck or limbs; Chemicals ruin skin. Ladies can cut the children's hair at home. Will shave the neck or the face like any razor and lasts a lifetime. Every time you cut your hair and shave, you save its cost. 50¢ Postpaid.

WONDER MFG. CO., Dept. 96, WINSTON-SALEM, N.C.

KODAKERS!

are being given away. Will there be one for you? Drop us a card now asking about it. We develop your films, 1 in. per roll, 100 ft. R, 4 and 5c. each.

FORD'S FOTO STUDIO, Ellensburg, Washington

GET THIN

REDUCE WEIGHT EASILY

No more worry about your over-stoutness. Take Oil of Korein, follow the simple, health-improving Korein system and it is positively guaranteed you will lose 10 to 60 pounds or even more—whatever amount of superfluous fat you need to be rid of—or this self treatment will cost you nothing. We offer \$100.00 Cash Guarantee! It is in every box.

Measure and weigh yourself now; watch the delightful steady reduction. Become healthier, younger in appearance, more active and attractive; gain real beauty.

This method is also guaranteed to be perfectly harmless. Oil of Korein is not a laxative; contains no thyroid—but is a vegetable oil containing genuine *fucus vesiculosus*, an ingredient obtained from certain seaweeds. Those who follow Korein system are astonished at the reduction—after all else fails. *Recommended by physicians.*



Oil of Korein

A prominent Philadelphian, George Reynolds, Walton Avenue, lost 20 lbs. the first month and continued using Oil of Korein, massaging himself daily, until he reduced 64 lbs. Mrs. J. B. Hansen, Plattsville, reduced 20 lbs. in less than 2 months. Mrs. L. C. Patrick, Nilard, wanted to reduce 8 lbs. and did so in two weeks. Miss Ray lost 69 lbs. An Albany business man, F. G. Drew, lost 56 lbs. in 3 months. Many say "fat seems to melt away," or "measurements decrease like magic," etc. Legions of voluntary testimonials.

Don't carry the tedious burden of unhealthy fat. Become slender and attractive by this superior easy method. Amaze yourself and friends. Increase your efficiency!

Oil of Korein comes in capsules, easy to take. Buy a small box at any busy pharmacy; or the druggist will get it for you. Or, write us and we will mail you a box in plain wrapper, which you may pay for when it comes to you. Begin reducing now! *Become thin and stay so!*

New Book "Reduce Weight Happily" gives helpful information. Will be mailed free on request. Cut this advertisement out and keep it. Show fat friends. Do not lose this chance of a lifetime to improve yourself marvelously. Address:

KOREIN CO., NL-103, Sta. F., New York

BOOK FREE

WONDERFUL PHONOGRAPH OFFER

Here is our New Style E. D. L. Phonograph—the latest improvement—without the horn. The lightest, most durable and compact practical phonograph ever produced. It is beautifully finished, tone arm black japanned, nickel winding crank, accurately constructed, smooth running spring motor, which plays 2 to 3 records at one winding, speed regulator, stop lever and felt-covered turn table. New improved sound box with mica diaphragm, which make perfect reproductions of all kinds of music—band pieces, talking pieces, instrumental, orchestra, vocal, etc.

Plays Any Disc Record

Up to 7 inches, and plays them properly. This machine is simply wonderful—not to be compared with any other of this kind. Will give you more entertainment than anything you ever owned. Strong and durable. Small and compact with no parts to get out of order.

Every Machine Regulated and Tested before it leaves the factory

and guaranteed in every way. A real phonograph, not a toy, yet small and light enough to be carried to camps, excursions, etc. Gives a clearness and volume of tone not surpassed by most high-priced instruments.

Free to You—Send No Money

Just your name and we will send you 24 of our Art Pictures to dispose of on special offer at 25c each. Send us the \$6 you collect and for your trouble we will send this new improved E. D. L. Phonograph and a selection of 6 records, free for your trouble. You can dispose of pictures and earn this great machine and the records in a few hours' time.

E. D. LIFE, 337 W. Madison St., 9T46 Chicago



WRINKLES

If this should meet the eye of any woman who is troubled with wrinkles and who would like to efface them, leaving her skin smooth. My address is: Elizabeth King, RB-103, Station F, New York City. This recipe is for a delightful emolient for worry lines, crows feet, and is held in high esteem by society ladies, actresses and others who use it.

DOUBLE CHIN

Get a small box of Oil of Korein capsules at the drug store, follow directions. If you wish a small, handsome chin and attractive figure.

LITTLE ADS

Write to Scott & Scott, Inc., Advertising Offices, 144 East 32nd Street, New York City, or 29 East Madison Street, Chicago, for particulars about advertising in this magazine.

AUTOMOBILES

FORDS START EASY IN COLD WEATHER with our new 1919 carburetors; 34 miles per gallon. Use cheapest gasoline or half kerosene. Increased power. Series for any motor. Very slow on high. Attach it yourself. Big profits to agents. Money-back guarantee. 30 days' trial. Air-Friction Carburetor Company, 172 Madison, Dayton, Ohio.

AIDS TO EFFICIENCY

MEET YOUR RESPONSIBILITY. New developments. Make efficiency count. Our wonder working Salesmanship and Efficiency course helped 25,000 last year to better their positions. It will help you. Write to-day. Knox School of Salesmanship and Business Efficiency, Engineers Bldg., Cleveland, O.

BE A DETECTIVE. Opportunity for men and women for Secret Investigation. Write C. T. Ludwig, 521 Westover Bldg., Kansas City, Mo.

BOOKS AND PERIODICALS

THE OOLOGIST IS THE ONLY PUBLICATION in America devoted to the interest of those making collections of eggs of North American birds. Its columns are filled with advertisements from parties desiring to exchange such specimens, also each issue contains many interesting articles and notes on the birds that the Boy Scout sees in his tramps and camps in the woods. Subscription 50 cts. per year. Sample copy free. Address Oologist, Lacon, Ill.

100,000 BOOKS. Including many rare, curious, fascinating editions. Secret societies, all details exposed, including Freemasonry, K. T., I. O. O. F., K. O. P., Grange, Elks; clairvoyancy, hypnotism, sex, science, unexpurgated classics, etc. Catalog, 10 cts. McCarthy's Big Book Emporium, 219 So. Dearborn St., Chicago.

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\$1 DOES IT. Get our bank references. Investigate us—that's all we ask \$1 few months gets Warranty Deed to land; interest in co-operative well; participation in entire subdivision earnings. May pay \$200 or more monthly. Maps, reports, established facts free. Address Sourlake Texas Oil Co., 817 De Menil, St. Louis, Mo.

GAIN 8 per cent. and other profits by small investment; pay in at easy convenience. Start on road to wealth. Wonderful opportunity. Write for particulars, Liberty Hog and Sheep Association, 216 So. LaSalle St., Chicago.

COINS AND STAMPS

180 ALL DIFF. incl. Cuba, Peru, Egypt, Greece; perforated gauge, album. Only 10 cts. Offer always good. C. M. Gibbs, S-3922 Juniper St., Los Angeles, Cal. **PAY** good for coins. Send 15c. Book showing prices paid. Roessler, East Orange, N. J.

CORRESPONDENCE TUITION

STUDY JOURNALISM. 20 Complete Lessons only \$1. Other courses. Write Efficiency Library, New Egypt, N. J. **DETECTIVES MAKE BIG MONEY!** Travel and see the country. We instruct you at nominal cost. Either sex. Write for free booklet. American School of Criminology, Dept. M, Detroit, Mich.

FOR THE HEALTH

REDUCE WEIGHT HAPPILY. If you are too fat, send for interesting book telling the best way to become slender, healthier and beautiful. Sent in plain envelope. Korein Company, NB-601, Sta. F, New York.

TOBACCO HEART. If smoking is affecting your heart or if it is weakening your eyes, conquer tobacco habit now and avoid early death or blindness, a fate that has befallen many others. Quit without drugs and improve health wonderfully. MacLevy's method is highly praised. If cured you pay us only \$1. If not cured, costs you not a cent. Write for it to-day. Albro Society, AA-601, Station F, New York.

MORPHINE AND LIQUOR habits successfully cured at home. Send stamp for booklet of information. Dr. Quayle's Sanitarium, Madison, Ohio.

HELP WANTED

U. S. GOVERNMENT wants help. Men, women, 18 or over. War preparations compelling thousands appointments \$100 month. Easy clerical work. Short hours. Vacations with pay. Common education sufficient. Write immediately for list and description of positions. Franklin Institute, Dept. P-103, Rochester, N. Y.

THOUSANDS MEN-WOMEN, 18 or over, wanted immediately, U. S. Government war positions, \$100 month. Easy clerical work. Write immediately for free list of positions open. Franklin Institute, Dept. P-103, Rochester, N. Y.

FIREMEN, BRAKEMEN, BAGGAGEMEN, \$140-\$200 monthly. Colored Porters, by railroads everywhere. Experience unnecessary. 821 Ry. Bureau, East St. Louis, Ill.

HELP WANTED—Continued

FIREMEN, BRAKEMEN, BAGGAGEMEN, \$140-\$200 monthly. Colored Porters, by railroads everywhere. Experience unnecessary. 821 Ry. Bureau, East St. Louis, Ill.

\$5.00 A DAY GATHERING EVERGREENS, roots and herbs. Ginseng, \$14 lb., Belladonna Seed, \$64 lb., or grow it yourself. Book and war prices free. Botanical, 66, New Haven, Conn.

MUSICAL

WRITE THE WORDS FOR A SONG. We write music and guarantee publisher's acceptance. Submit poems on war, love or any subject. Chester Music Company, 538 So. Dearborn St., Suite 249, Chicago, Illinois.

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YOUR LIFE-STORY IN THE STARS. Send birth date and time for trial reading. You'll be delighted. Address, Janus, 712 Fountain Place, Kansas City, Mo.

GET MARRIED. Best matrimonial magazine published. Mailed free. American Distributor, Blairsville, Pa.

MARRY; Many Rich. Particulars for stamp. Mrs. Morrison, 3053 W. Holden, Seattle, Wash.

MARRY RICH. Hundreds anxious; description list free. Satisfaction guaranteed. Select Club, Dept. S. S., Emporia, Kansas.

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ST-STU-T-Y-TERING and stammering cured at home. Instructive booklet free. Walter McDonnell, 15 Potomac Bank Building, Washington, D. C.

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WANTED TO BUY typewriters, any make. Give description. M. M. Selde, 142 E. 32d St., New York.

WANTED AT ALL TIMES. Red, Cross, Black foxes, Coon; also pelts of all kinds. I will pay 10 per cent. more than any one. R. L. Todd, Dept. S. S., Milltown, N. B., Canada.

WE BUY old gold, diamonds, watches, platinum, silver, jewelry. We will pay up to \$35 per set for discarded false teeth (broken or not). Cash sent at once—goods held 5 to 15 days and returned at our expense if offer is refused. Certificate granted us from State of Wisconsin. Absolutely responsible, liberal and reliable. Address: United States Smelting Works, Inc., 401 Goldsmith Bldg., Opp. P. O., Milwaukee, Wis.

MISCELLANEOUS

PRESIDENTIAL PUZZLE. Most fascinating, instructive and interesting; complete in neat box, 25 cents, postpaid. O. S. Michel, Box 293, Newark, N. J.

SELL "PERSHING IN FRANCE." Great war picture. Big patriotic hit. Make \$10 daily. Regular 25 cents. Sample only 10 cents, prepaid. Send now. Address: Publisher School News, New Egypt, N. J.

WHEN DO FISH BITE BEST? The Old Fisherman's Calendar tells when. Go on the right days. Send 25 cts. to-day to O. F. Calendar, Box 946 H, Sta. Springfield, Mass.

YOU CAN MAKE GOOD, durable paints and varnish 15 cents gallon. Write for details. Emmelmann Bros. Manufacturing Co., Dept. J, Indianapolis, Ind.

POWERINE IS EQUAL TO GASOLINE at 5 cts. a gallon. Salesmen and agents wanted. Exclusive territory granted. Powerine is guaranteed to be harmless, to remove and prevent carbon, doubling the life of all gasoline motors, saving repairs, adding snap, speed and power. An amount equal to 20 gallons of gasoline will be sent to any address in the U. S., charges prepaid, for \$1. W. Porter Barnes, Dept. 10, Santa Rosa, Cal.

DEN PICTURES. Real photos from life. Fascinating Art Models' poses. Sample "Bathing Girl" and catalog, 10 cents. Simpson Co., Wheeling, W. Va.

ELECTRICAL TATTOOING MACHINES \$1.50. Hand outfits 50 cents. Catalogue free. Prof. J. H. Tenke, 517 Central Ave., Cincinnati, Ohio.

100 BEAUTIFUL POSTCARDS and pictures 10c. Taylor Co., 3820 Lincoln Ave., East St. Louis, Ill.

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MYSTERIOUS PENCIL. Writes message; answers your private questions. Brings happiness. Sample free. Dr. Martin, 411 West Ferry, Buffalo, N. Y.

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BEST DEVELOPING, printing in country. Send 3c for circulars or 20c and roll for sample developing and printing. Rare bargains in used cameras. Miles K. Greenwood, Melrose, Mass.

VENTRILOQUISM

Taught Almost Anyone at Home. Small cost. Send today 3-cent stamp for particulars and proof. R. A. Smith, Room R-580, 801 BIGELOW ST., PEORIA, ILL.



FREE TO BOYS

Real Rugby Football. Strong, Serviceable. Cover, best Rubber Bladder. FREE for getting 20 packages of Blazo Perfumed Ironing Wax at 10c each. No trouble to get. Write to day. Send no money. Extra present if you order now.

Blazo Co. Dept. V11 Binghamton, N.Y.

Submit your Song-Poems NOW for free examination and advice. We revise poems, compose music of any description, secure copyright and employ original methods for facilitating FREE PUBLICATION or outright SALE of songs under a certificate GUARANTEE. ING you satisfaction. **SONGWRITERS' MANUAL SENT FREE** Card brings you a copy of our Free Booklet which tells you who we are, explains our methods and contains valuable information and instructions. This is your opportunity to learn the truth regarding the song-writing profession from a reliable and successful concern. **KNICKERBOCKER STUDIOS, 79 Gaiety Bldg., N. Y. City**

\$100 PANTS MADE TO MEASURE

Not \$1.00, not even 50c, not one cent cost to you under our easy conditions. No extra charges for fancy styles, belt loops, golf bottoms, pearl buttons, all FREE. Before you buy a suit or pants, before you take another order, get our free samples and wonderful new offer. All other Agents write too. Ask for the big, new different tailoring deal. Costs nothing, write today. Address **KNICKERBOCKER TAILORING CO** Dept. 144 Chicago, Ill.



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Wear it for your brother, father, son, sweetheart—acid test—guaranteed to wear five years. Secure only two new subscriptions to Everyday Life at 25c a year. Tell your subscribers Everyday Life is an illustrated monthly publication devoted to the interests of the home, and contains latest official Government news, war garden helps in season, banning, drying and food-saving hints, etc. Positively the best paper ever given at the price. No free copies on account of regulations, but everybody knows of Everyday Life—been published over 15 years and circulates in all the small towns and villages of the country. Send us the 50c collected and in return for this service we will send you this beautiful Service Flag Ring free, and each of the subscribers our paper for one year. Any size. **EVERYDAY LIFE.** Dept. S. F. 46 Chicago

Big Premium Budget 10c 17 Popular Songs with Music, 25 Portraits, Actresses, Presidents of U. S., 14 Complete Stories, 63 Magic Tricks, 88 Amusing Experiments, 13 Puzzles, 22 Riddles, 60 Parlor Games, 150 Riddles and Conundrums, 100 Jokes, and Free Reading, 60 Money-Making Secrets, 64 Albums Verses, Dictionary of Dreams. Send us 10c, and we will send all the above, and Big Novelty and Jewelry Catalogue. **E. J. DEMPSEY, Dept. J-3711 Boyd Av., Westchester, N.Y.**

He Quit Cigarettes



GAINED OVER 30 POUNDS

"I smoked cigarettes ever since a boy. From six to eight sacks of tobacco I used weekly," states Mr. S. H. Ferguson.

Cigarettes were doing me great harm. I became so nervous that I couldn't sleep until I smoked. Each morning I had an awful taste in my mouth.

"Several times I tried to quit by will-power, but it just seemed that I would go wild if I couldn't have cigarettes.

"I had almost given up hope of ever quitting until one day I sent for a free book by Mr. Woods that told me what to do. After learning the way, I quit easily in 3 days and haven't touched a cigarette in years. I have gained over 30 pounds and cannot praise the method too highly. I say to every cigarette smoker—if you can't quit without help get this book," so says Mr. Ferguson, of Crumps Park.

The foregoing remarks are like those of many other men who have been freed from the habit of smoking cigarettes, pipe or cigars or who have been chewing tobacco or dipping snuff excessively.

Write at once to Mr. Edw. J. Woods, WC-103, Station F, New York, N. Y., and get his book. It is free; postpaid to you. Cut this out and show others.

HEAVEN AND HELL.

Swedenborg's great work, 400 pages, 16 cts. postpaid. Pastor Landenberger, Windsor Place, St. Louis, Mo.

\$1.00 Earn \$1.00

Write for 12 of Our Famous Art Pictures. Sell for 25c each. When sold send us \$2.00 and keep \$1.00. WAP CO., 961 East 23d St., Brooklyn, N. Y.

AND BOIES—He's Got 'Em Animals, Birds, Fish, Insects, Pheasants, etc. Buy and sell. Write for CATALOG listing over 1000 items with prices and conditions. Send 10c for illustrated book on raising and selling. Write to-day. Address: Robert Pat Stock Farm, Box 240, Millbrook, N. Y.

I WAS BALD

AFFIDAVIT re HAIR GROWTH

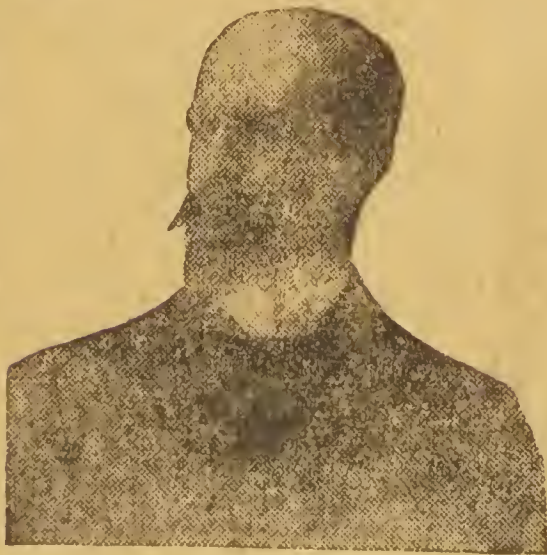
While completely bald on the top of my head as shown in my photograph which accompanies this affidavit, I adopted a hair cosmetic and formula given me by an old Cherokee Indian. Within six months my head was covered with a new and luxuriant growth of hair. I now supply Ko-tal-ko, a pomade prepared according to the original formula which resulted in my own hair growth. The statements in my advertisement are true and my photographs are correct.

John Hart Brittain

Personally appeared before me, John Hart Brittain, this fifth day of June, 1917, who signed the foregoing in my presence and who being duly sworn, attested that same is true.



John H. Brittain
Notary Public



From former photograph of J. H. Brittain

You Never Saw a Bald Indian

So positive am I that Kotalko is absolutely unsurpassed for aiding in hair growth that I offer it under \$300.00 cash guarantee. You may obtain a box of Kotalko compounded according to the original genuine Indian principle, on receipt of \$1.00. Or, write for copy of the recipe (free) with interesting book of facts, to

JOHN HART BRITTAIN

150 East 32nd St. (BR-103)
New York City

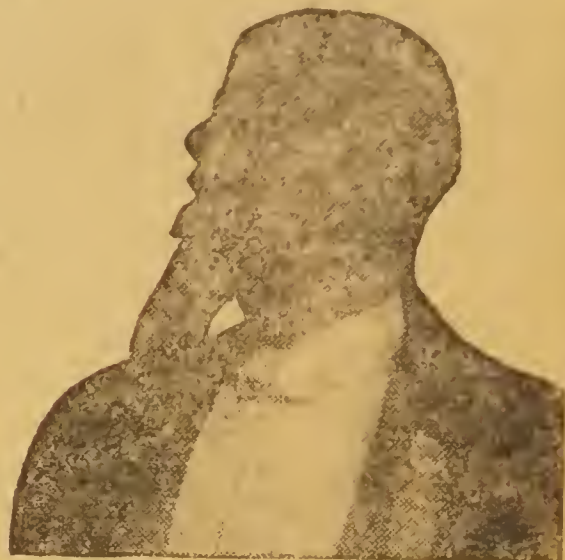
JOHN HART BRITTAIN,
150 East 32nd St., New York, N. Y.

Herewith is \$1.00, for which please send me one box of KOTALKO for the hair.

Postal Address _____

Name _____

FULL HAIR GROWTH NOW



From recent photograph of J. H. Brittain

In early manhood I was troubled with dandruff and my hair began to fall out.

Being naturally proud—call it vanity if you will—I used one hair tonic, lotion, etc., after another, in the hope of preventing the loss of my hair. Nothing saved my hair, however, and I resigned myself to the probability of lifelong baldness.

The engravings here printed are from actual photographs. The baldness was greater than apparent in the earlier picture as it extended over the back of my head.

In the course of my career, I had business with certain members of the Cherokee tribe of Indians and met a "medicine man" who gave me a pomade which I agreed to apply to my scalp.

To my surprise and joy, tiny hairs began to appear and gradually a growth of hair was developed all over my scalp. It was amazing to observe the improvement from week to week. A prolific hair crop resulted and has never left me although many years have passed.

RECIPE FREE TO YOU

The Cherokee wizard's secret or principle was imparted to me and I am willing to send the recipe free if you merely write, asking for it, enclosing stamp. Some marvelous results have been reported by both ladies and gentlemen. The pomade is called Kotalko. It is for men, women and children.

Kotalko is different from all the liquid lotions and hair tonics, washes, shampoos, etc. It is in a class by itself. It is to be applied with the finger tips where the hair is weak or where the scalp is bald.



WILD WEST WEEKLY

—LATEST ISSUES—

- Young Wild West and "Montana Mose"; or, Arietta's Messenger of Death.
 Young Wild West at Grizzly Gulch; or, The Shot That Saved the Camp.
 817 Young Wild West On the Warpath; or, Arietta Among the Arapahoes.
 818 Young Wild West and "Nebraska Nick"; or, The Cattle Thieves of the Platte.
 819 Young Wild West and the Magic Mine; or, How Arietta Solved a Mystery.
 820 Young Wild West as a Cavalry Scout; or, Saving the Settlers.
 821 Young Wild West Beating the Bandits; or, Arietta's Best Shot.
 822 Young Wild West and "Crazy Hawk"; or, The Redskin's Last Raid.
 823 Young Wild West Chasing the Cowboys; or, Arietta the Lariat Queen.
 824 Young Wild West and the Treacherous Trapper; or, Lost In the Great North Woods.
 825 Young Wild West's Dash to Deadwood; or, Arietta and the Kidnapers.
 826 Young Wild West's Silver Scoop; or, Cleaning Up a Hundred Thousand.
 827 Young Wild West and the Oregon Outlaws; or, Arietta as a "Judge".
 828 Young Wild West and "Mexican Matt"; or, Routing the Rawhide Rangers.
 829 Young Wild West and the Comanche Queen; or, Arietta As An Archer.

- 830 Young Wild West and the "Gold Ring"; or, The Flashy Flash.
 831 Young Wild West's Double Rescue; or, Arietta's Race with Death.
 832 Young Wild West and the Texas Rangers; or, Crooked Work On the Rio Grande.
 833 Young Wild West's Branding Bee; or, Arietta and the Cow Punchers.
 834 Young Wild West and His Partner's Pile, and How Arietta Saved It.
 835 Young Wild West at Diamond Dip; or, Arietta's Secret Foo.
 836 Young Wild West's Buckhorn Bowle, and How It Saved His Partners.
 837 Young Wild West In the Haunted Hills; or, Arietta and the Aztec Arrow.
 838 Young Wild West's Cowboy Dance; or, Arietta Annoying Admirer.
 839 Young Wild West's Double Shot; or, Cheyenne Charlie's Life Line.
 840 Young Wild West at Gold Gorge; or, Arietta and the Drop of Death.

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HARRY E. WOLFF, Publisher, - - - - - 166 West 23d St., New York.

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of these weeklies and cannot procure them from newsdealers, they can be obtained from the publishers direct. Write out and fill in your Order and send it with the price of the weeklies you want, and the weeklies will be sent to you by return mail. POSTAGE STAMPS TAKEN THE SAME AS MONEY.

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No. 46. HOW TO MAKE AND USE ELECTRICITY.—A description of the wonderful uses of electricity and electro magnetism; together with full instructions for making Electric Toys, Batteries, etc. By George Trebel, A.M., M.D. Containing over fifty illustrations.

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No. 71. HOW TO DO MECHANICAL TRICKS.—Containing complete illustrations for performing over sixty Mechanical Tricks. Fully illustrated.

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